







Mubarak with Chirac at the Elysée Palace; and the next day with Sheikh Zayed in Geneva on his way back to Cairo

## The France factor

President Mubarak's brief visit to France this week, close on the heels of the Cairo Arab Summit, underlined the growing significance of France's role in the region. **Nevine Khalil** reviews the visit

President Hosni Mubarak visited Paris for 24 hours on Monday to discuss the peace process with French President Jacques Chirac, who is seeking a greater role for Europe in the Middle East. The two presidents found much common ground regarding the current situation in the region, and the steps that should be taken to bolster peace negotiations, and the meeting represented a coming together of Arab and European positions regarding the peace process and its future after the election in Israel of right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Chirac and Mubarak, who led the Arabs to their first summit in six years, reviewed the outcome of the 22 June Arab summit, the G7 industrial countries meeting on 29 June in Lyon and the European summit in Florence, a week earlier. All three meetings had discussed the peace process, and advocated the land-for-peace formula.

After their discussions, both presidents called for the continuation of negotiations on the basis of the existing accords, within the framework of the 1991 Madrid conference. "We do not want to interrupt the peace process, because it is in the interests of the

whole region," Mubarak told reporters after two-hour talks with Chirac on Monday night. "But the principle of land-for-peace must be maintained." He said that his scheduled meeting later this month with Netanyahu would decide how negotiations would proceed.

Although Egypt appears to be turning to Europe to play a more substantial role in the peace process, the US, Egypt continues to stress, remains the main peace broker in the region. Foreign Minister Amr Moussa denied reports of tensions between Egypt and US, saying that the US role as "an honest broker, helping both sides to reach a solution", must continue.

Chirac's France had already underlined its renewed interest in the Middle East and the peace process when Paris helped broker a ceasefire between Israel and Lebanese Hizbullah guerrillas in April. Mubarak described France's stand on the peace process as "very strong", while Chirac said that his views and analyses of the situation were very similar to Mubarak's.

During his visit to Cairo in May, Chirac committed Egypt to expanding its role in the peace process. "Europe cannot only be a financier," he said. "It must increase its political input so that it will become one of the sponsors." He added

that he hoped to give France's Middle East policy "a new vitality".

Contacts for Mubarak's visit began before the EU summit two weeks ago — sufficient time for France "to fully comprehend the Arab position", especially that of frontline states in the negotiations, according to Osama El-Baz, Mubarak's political advisor. "Egypt attaches much importance to the French stand, and we understand that France has played a major role in crystallising the European view," he said. Chirac told reporters that the final statements at the three summits show "the collective will supporting the peace process".

Egypt, meanwhile, applauded the EU and G7 communiqués which supported the land-for-peace formula as a principle for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. The communiqués called upon all parties in the Middle East to carry out their obligations under the peace process, saying that a comprehensive peace in the region could only be achieved on the basis of the principles of the Madrid conference and UN resolutions.

"The peace process cannot continue unless the land-for-peace principle is adopted," Moussa said. He told reporters in Paris: "Egypt, Arab states and the European countries are par-

ticipating in a positive way towards building the peace process."

Minister of Information Safwat El-Sherif said that Egyptian-French coordination was a symbol of Arab-European coordination since Mubarak was speaking on behalf of the Arab nations, and Chirac for the Europeans. "This meeting is the cornerstone for Arab-European coordination," El-Sherif added. Egypt's Ambassador to Paris Ali Maher underscored the importance of Egyptian diplomacy at this time, to face the challenges and obstacles hindering the peace process.

Mubarak also met with the head of France's Jewish community, Henri Hajdenberg whom he reportedly told that the peace process "must continue because its completion is the best way of ensuring Israeli security".

On his way back to Cairo on Tuesday, Mubarak stopped over for a few hours in Geneva to meet with the United Arab Emirates President, Sheikh Zayed Al-Nahyan, to discuss the situation in the Middle East and the results of the Cairo and Paris meetings. Before leaving for Cairo, Mubarak also met with UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

## Opposition editor attacked

Last Monday's attack on Magdi Hussein, the editor of the Islamist newspaper *Al-Shaab*, has the journalist seething and Interior Minister Hassan El-Alfi investigating. **Amira Howeid** reports

With its headline reading, "A barbarous attack on *Al-Shaab*'s editor", last Tuesday's edition of *Al-Shaab*, the mouthpiece of the Islamist-orientated Labour party, devoted its front page and subsequent column inches in other pages to the attack on its editor, Magdi Hussein, by unidentified culprits.

Twenty-four hours after the incident, the Press Syndicate issued a statement condemning the attack which "raises various questions in the minds of journalists". The statement pointed out that the incident is the second of its kind, with the first being when the editor of *Al-Had* newspaper, Gamal Badawi, fell victim to a similar attack in May 1995. The police has not yet arrested the perpetrators.

The statement warned that "turning a blind eye to such incidents, without arresting those

who committed them, is an unprecedented, dangerous and unique phenomenon that threatens the freedom of society and the security of its individuals more than it threatens the freedom of the press and safety of the reporters".

According to *Al-Shaab*'s report of the incident, the 45-year old editor was attacked and severely beaten on Monday at 1.30 in the afternoon by seven "body-builder" types, which the paper alleged were civilian-clothed security men. The attack took place as Hussein stopped at a traffic light close to the *Al-Shaab* and Labour Party offices in Sayeda Zeinab. The seven men, claimed the report, came out of two cars which had been tailing Hussein from the moment he left his home in Manyal El-Roda across the Nile.

When Hussein's car stopped at the traffic light, one of the two cars carrying the security forces sped past, cut in front of it and reversed into it. In a matter of seconds the seven men got out of their cars, pulled Hussein from his car, and "se-

verely beat him after pushing him to the ground. They broke his glasses and stole his suitcase and car keys before speeding away in their cars, with two motorcycles clearing the road ahead," reported *Al-Shaab*. This lead story was published alongside two large photos of a bruised and blood-stained Hussein lying in hospital.

The newspaper also mentioned that this attack was subsequent to several death threats Hussein received over the phone over the past few weeks. The threats, the paper noted, came after *Al-Shaab* published a series of "documented" stories accusing the two sons of Interior Minister Hassan El-Alfi of misusing their father's authority for various business gains.

A source in the Interior Ministry's Information Centre told the *Weekly* that the minister was "very disturbed" at hearing of the attack and immediately formed a task force drawn from the ranks of the Cairo Bureau of the State Security Investigations (SSI), to investigate the incident. The source, however, pointedly remarked that after Hussein was attacked, he "refused" to lodge a formal complaint with the police, as would any victim. Asked whether El-Alfi will an-

swer Hussein's accusations, the source said it was "very unlikely".

Meanwhile, the Labour party's legal consultant Helmi Murad told the *Weekly* that Hussein will file a law suit against El-Alfi's sons demanding an investigation into the sources of their "massive fortune". Hussein, on the other hand, said that he intends to seek a meeting with President Hosni Mubarak so that the president can "intervene to stop these attacks on journalists".

Hussein views this recent attack as a warning by El-Alfi to end the campaign against his two sons but, he said, "I will not stop. I'll continue, whatever the price" he told the *Weekly*. Responding to questions on why he did not lodge a complaint with the police, Hussein argued that "the issue has become a political, not a legal one... and how can I turn to the same authorities [for help] that I accuse of attacking me?"

He admitted that although he sustained physical injuries, the incident has "served" him very well. "We can now simply call for the removal of El-Alfi as we did with former Interior Minister, Zaki Badr," he said.

## Water everywhere...

**Zeinab Abul-Gheit** reports on an original project aimed at conserving precious water

In many homes throughout Egypt gallons of water are wasted every day through leaks and inefficient plumbing. It is estimated that 50 per cent of Egypt's available potable water is lost before it can be used: 15 per cent is lost from the water networks before reaching the consumer; the remaining 35 per cent either seeps under bathroom and kitchen floors, drips unheeded from leaking taps, or is flushed away in over-large lavatory cisterns.

This is waste that the nation can ill afford: the internationally recognised minimum annual water requirement per individual is calculated at 1,000 cubic metres. In Egypt, the average share is only 935 cubic metres. And, while the population will have risen considerably by the year 2000, the amount of potable water available will remain at 1990 levels — 3.1 billion cubic metres per year.

But while these figures seem grim, there is an obvious solution — if the water which is currently lost was saved, it would go a long way towards providing the population, including those who currently do not have water piped into their homes, with their water requirements for the 21st century. To this end, a pioneering project by the National Community Water Conservation Programme (NCWCP) is raising awareness of the seriousness of the situation, and offering simple, practical ways to save water in the home and public places.

A study carried out at the Mogamma government building in Cairo's Tahrir Square demonstrated the extent of the problem. During the period between midnight and 4am, when the building was unoccupied, 80 per cent of the water initially present in pipes and lavatories was lost. After carrying out repairs on seven of the Mogamma's 13 floors, water loss was reduced by 30 per cent.

The NCWCP's initial project concentrated on the governorates of Cairo, Ismailia and Suez, and implemented 100 small schemes in these areas, the largest of which was the distribution of 100,000 plastic water displacement bags. When put

into lavatory cisterns, these bags take up space equivalent to two litres of water, saving an equivalent amount every time the lavatory is flushed. "Through low-cost technology, this programme aims at making people realise that it is possible to save water," explained Mahmoud Mahmoud, head of the NCWCP's information centre.

According to studies, the ideal capacity for a lavatory cistern is 6-7 litres; the average capacity of an Egyptian lavatory cistern, however, ranges between 8-12 litres. It is estimated that each household using the bag will save 40 litres per day. Overall, the bags should save two million cubic metres of water annually, enough to provide 10,000 families with running water.

To promote self-sufficiency, the project insisted that the bags be made in Egypt, although the costs were higher. "Egyptian money should be put into Egyptian products," argued Mahmoud. As a result of the scheme's success, another million bags will be produced to be distributed in seven governorates in the next stage of the programme.

Water conservation is a cost effective policy. It costs the Cairo Governorate 46 piastres to purify one cubic metre of water, only 10 piastres of which is passed on to the consumer. Therefore, it has been calculated that the 100,000 water displacement bags have actually saved LE1 million. "Our aim was to make people recognise that a small plastic bag could save millions of pounds," explained Isam Nada, of the Community Action Coordination Team, a group affiliated to the project. "Saving drinking water means saving money," added Mahmoud. "The money saved here should be used to provide water pipes for the 30 per cent of Cairo that do not have running water."

According to Ashraf Nassar, an engineer

working in the field of industry and development, there are many other ways — in addition to being leak-free — that new technology can help save water. One simple example is a shower head made with fewer holes, each with a smaller diameter. The new shower head provides ten litres of water every minute, in comparison to the 25-30 litres from an old-style shower. Taps can also be made more efficient if their copper core is replaced with ceramic material, and proper washers can reduce waste by 30 per cent. Spring-loaded taps, and metered taps providing between 0.5-2 litres of water in 30 seconds, are also products of the new technology. Used in public facilities in Suez, such taps have saved 15,000 cubic metres a year, Nassar said. This saving, he added, would be sufficient to provide running water to 55 households.

To ensure that new systems are properly installed and existing ones efficiently maintained, the project recognised the need for a well trained force of plumbers. To this end the project came up with a system for licensing plumbers, which has now been approved by the Ministry of Manpower. In addition, the Ministry of Reconstruction, industrial schools and companies are now running training courses in plumbing for unemployed graduates.

Promoting public awareness is another vital part of the project's work. The programme has gone out into the community to promote itself through mosques, churches and social groups. Conservation groups have been formed in 4,500 schools in Cairo. Cooperation agreements have been reached between the programme and tourist villages, with technical advice provided and new plumbing specifications agreed upon. Symposia and meetings have been held in local councils, and non-governmental organisations have agreed to promote water conservation awareness. Water conservation programmes have been successfully implemented in public institutions like hospitals, churches, mosques and schools.

## Egypt-US relations: 'differences not crisis'

President Mubarak denied there was a crisis in Egyptian-US relations, despite differences in views on several regional issues. **Khaled Dawoud** reports

President Hosni Mubarak's statements this week, denying a reported crisis in relations between Egypt and the United States, confirmed that Cairo was not seeking an escalation of its differences with Washington over the future of the Arab-Israeli peace process and the armament situation in the region.

In earlier statements, Foreign Minister Amr Moussa told reporters, "I cannot describe Egyptian-American relations as tense or stiff. But there are points of difference concerning the evaluation of certain issues related to the peace process and other matters". He added that such differences in views "were normal in international relations" and also existed between the United States and Israel.

Reports of an Egyptian-American dispute immediately followed the announcement of the convening of the Arab summit in Cairo, after a meeting between President Mubarak, Syrian President Hafez Al-Assad and Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz in Damascus in mid-June.

US State Department officials were not discreet in expressing their dismay that the summit was going to take place immediately after the tight victory of Israeli right-wing Premier Benjamin Netanyahu. An American official who accompanied US Secretary of State Warren Christopher on his visit to Israel and Egypt last week told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that the US administration would have preferred the summit not to have taken place. "The statement issued by Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia after their meeting in Damascus could have been enough to express their worries after the change of government in Israel," the official said.

Reporters who accompanied Christopher on his tour of the region quoted him as saying that the American administration was not satisfied with all the statements included in the Arab leaders' final communiqué released on 23 June at the end of their two-day meeting in Cairo. He described the communiqué as a general document, reflecting a variety of views ranging from those of radical Arab countries such as Libya and Sudan to the conservative oil-rich Gulf states.

Following his talks with Mubarak in Cairo last week, Christopher reiterated the American view that all efforts should be directed towards resuming negotiations between the Arabs and Israel. "All that we are saying is that the parties should sit together and talk about their differences," US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns told reporters last week.

During his visit to Paris on Monday, Mubarak said he would not reach any conclusions on the future of the peace process until meeting Netanyahu in Cairo after the Israeli premier's visit to Washington this week. Mubarak is also due to meet US President Bill Clinton in late July.

But the American dissatisfaction over the Arab summit was not only limited to official statements. One day before the opening of the Arab summit, on 21 June, the *Washington Times* published a "leaked" CIA report saying Egypt had purchased advanced Scud C missile materials from North Korea, violating US laws on weapons proliferation.

During the peak of the dispute between Egypt and Israel last year over Cairo's insistence that Tel Aviv should also sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and open its nuclear installations to international inspection, the United States stood firmly behind its "strategic ally" in its rejection of the treaty.

Amused by the fuss which Egypt caused over the matter and its lobbying of Arab countries to join its stand, the response was a series of similarly "leaked" CIA reports. The reports quoted US officials as expressing their dismay over Egypt's maintaining of relations with Libya, and accusing Cairo of breaking the UN embargo imposed on Tripoli for its alleged involvement in the Lockerbie bombing in 1988, which killed 270 people. A series of reports also appeared in American newspapers, containing allegations of corruption against several Egyptian senior government officials. The leakage of reports, however, stopped when the crisis over the treaty was over.

Egypt, by now adept at being the object of such American campaigns, decided to ignore the latest Scud-C furore. But Israel did not. Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy expressed concern over reports of the deal, while Israeli television's Channel Two added its own touch to the affair, claiming that Egypt had also bought Scud missile launchers from Slovenia. The Slovenian government immediately issued a statement saying that as it did not possess Scud C missiles, it was hardly in a position to sell Scud launchers.

Asked if Christopher's visit had cleared up the matter of the reported North Korean deal, a senior Egyptian diplomat told the *Weekly*: "You should ask the Americans if this matter is over. They were the ones who raised it in the first place." He added that Egypt's clear stand on the issue was that if there was going to be any discussion on armaments in the region, it should include all types of weapons, including the weapons of mass destruction and highly sophisticated nuclear weapons possessed by Israel.

Cairo currently receives a total of \$2.1 billion per year in aid from the United States. The close relationship between the two countries since the mid-70s has had a major impact in the region, particularly during the 1990 Gulf War and in convincing Arab parties to take part in the opening of the Madrid peace conference in 1991.

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## A palace for all children

Within the framework of an ambitious plan adopted by the General Organisation for Cultural Palaces (GOCF) in conjunction with the Cabinet's Information Centre, Mrs Suzanne Mubarak last week inaugurated the first specialised cultural palace for handicapped and non-handicapped children. Rania Khalaf reports.

The bi-level palace offers children a variety of services including a small workshop for plastic arts, science clubs, theatre, puppet shows, a library and musical activities. Also part of the centre is a computer club which provides the children with specialised training and use of the Internet.

Praising the efforts exerted in establishing this unique project, Mrs Mubarak said that the cultural palace "includes everything I could have dreamed of for handicapped children." The new palace also houses a special library and studio, stocked with state-of-the-art equipment for recording songs and stories for blind children. These studios, she added, will also be used to produce special cassettes for handicapped children. Mrs Mubarak recommended that these tapes be distributed to different cultural palaces in various governorates.

Commenting on the project, Hussein Mahran, head of the GOCF, said that the new centre is part and parcel of the Reading For All festival sponsored by Mrs Mubarak. This new centre, he added, will provide children with the proper environment under which they can nurture and develop their skills and talents. The palace, said Mahran, is an integrated information centre that encompasses all activities related to the needs of children and is linked to other specialised children's cultural palaces throughout the country.

"This will help encourage children to perform their music shows in other palaces," he said. To help the children learn how to use the equipment there will be several highly-qualified trainers in different fields.

The GOCF, said Mahran, plans to establish a new children's cultural palace every year to help meet the "cultural" requirements of Egyptian children. New, specialised cultural palaces are currently being built in the governorates of Menoufiya, Sohag, Menya, Qena, Qalubia, Kafri Al-Sheikh and Bahariya.

At the inauguration of this centre, Mrs Mubarak attended a puppet show staged by handicapped and mentally challenged children. Fatma El-Mas'udi, the director of the palace and producer of the show, said that the palace offers talented, handicapped children an excellent opportunity to participate in plays and concerts. By engaging in these activities alongside other children, handicapped children will be able to lead a more stable life, she said.



## Intellectual honours

The state's annual merit and incentive awards for achievement in literature, the arts and social science have been met — for the first time in years — with approval. **Amira Howaidy** applauds the winners

"I was very happy, not because I got one myself, but because it is the first time in 30 or 40 years that three women have received the state's merit awards," recipient Latifa El-Zayyat told *Al-Ahram Weekly* upon the announcement of the state's 1995 annual Merit and Incentive Awards for distinguished achievement in literature, the arts and social science.

True enough, the honours, first awarded in 1960 and marked by a gold medal and LE5,000, had, in recent years, gained the reputation of ignoring women and carrying favour with officialdom.

Candidates for the merit awards are nominated by universities, the Arabic Language Academy and other literary and artistic societies. Candidates for the incentive awards nominate themselves. Two years ago, the Higher Cultural Council, the body affiliated to the Ministry of Culture which chooses the final recipients, announced that it was raising the value of the award from LE5,000 to LE25,000 in response to criticism of their low amount. However, the rise has not been passed on to this year's award winners.

According to Gaber Asfour, head of the Higher Cultural Council, the decision was drafted into a law that has not yet been passed by the People's Assembly. "It's out of our hands now," he told the *Weekly*. "Perhaps the People's Assembly had more important laws to deal with, like the press law."

In literature, this year's merit awards went to prominent Islamic advocate and TV personality, Mustafa Mahmoud, aged 75, novelist Latifa El-Zayyat, aged 73, and critic Badawi Tabana. The arts award went to film director Henry Barakat and painter Tahia Halim. Aisha Rateb, professor of international law and former minister of social affairs, social scientist Said Ashour, historian Yunan Labib Rizq and professor of philosophy Fuad Zakaria won the social science awards. Recipients of 16 incentive awards included prominent musician Ahmed El-Saedi and cartoonist Mona Abul-Nasr.

Aisha Rateb, generally accepted as Egypt's most popular social affairs minister, is a professor at Cairo University and was Egypt's first woman ambassador. As minister for a seven-year stretch, her policies, oriented towards reinforcing women's status and community service, often stirred controversy. In 1977 she resigned from office in protest at the late President Anwar El-Sadat's summary dismissal of the food riots of January of that year as a "thieves' uprising". Rateb returned once again to the academic fold, where she had been the first woman on the international law staff of Cairo University's Faculty of Law and the first woman on the Faculty's council. Her published works include *The 23rd of July Revolution* and *International Arab Relations*.

Tahia Halim is best known for her prolific paintings inspired by Nubia, which she visited many times before it was submerged under the Aswan High Dam. The themes of most of Halim's work are derived from Egyptian folklore, creating what critics consider a unique school of art. In 1959 she opened the School of Painting, and in 1969 she received the state's incentive award for her painting "More than stone". In celebration of the artist's work, El-Gomhouriya National Theatre last month staged a play about her life story.

Philosopher and prominent writer, Fuad Zakaria was flung from the ivory towers of academia into the political lime light in the early seventies when he wrote a series of articles attacking Nasserist authoritarianism after Sadat's Corrective Revolution. Zakaria pursued this trend when he answered Mo-

hamed Hassanein Heikal's *Autumn of Fury* — (a criticism of Sadat's 1981 arrest campaign) in his book *Furious for how long?* Although Zakaria has written extensively on German philosophy and the modern schools of philosophy, he is more famous for his political views and his public debates, especially his discussions with leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood at the Doctors' Syndicate. Zakaria was also editor of *Fekr Mu'asser* (Contemporary Thought), the only Arab magazine specialising in social and philosophical issues.

Mustafa Mahmoud is a graduate of Cairo University's School of Medicine, and a specialist in chest diseases. He turned to journalism in 1957 and became one of the most prolific authors of his time, writing over 30 novels, short stories and plays in addition to hundreds of articles and many books which reflected his famous shift from existentialism to Islamism.

Mahmoud is perhaps best-known for his TV programme, broadcast in Egypt and in many parts of the Arab world, in which he tries to explain the links between modern science and Islamic doctrine. He is famous also for the mosque and hospital he established in Mohandessin in 1975 which carry his name. Thousands of people visit the mosque, particularly at fast times.

Henry Barakat has directed memorable films such as *Afrah We Arneeb* (Mouths and Rabbits) and *Al-Haram* (The Forbidden). He directed his first documentary film, *Traffic in Alexandria*, in 1939, and his first feature film *Always in My Heart* in 1946.

Writer, literary critic and professor of English literature, Latifa El-Zayyat was raised in a family of nationalists, and began her political activities as an English literature student at Cairo University. Her long history of political commitment, stretching from university demonstrations in 1946 to her imprisonment under Sadat's sweeping arrest campaign in 1981, earned her the reputation of an activist intellectual. El-Zayyat has also remained active as head of the Committee for the Defence of National Culture, which is currently lobbying against normalisation with Israel and the formation of a Middle East market. El-Zayyat's latest work, *Search Campaign — Personal Papers* was published in 1994. According to prominent critic Ali El-Razi, El-Zayyat "has always been aware with energy". Her award was long overdue, he added.

There is no doubt that this year's awards are — generally — far better than in previous years," El-Razi told the *Weekly*. "It is also an indication that the selection process is working well." While describing the choice of three women, including El-Zayyat, as "very pleasing", he believes the selection process would work even better if voting procedures were changed. In his view, the direct affiliation of the bodies concerned with the nomination procedures to the Ministry of Culture has always given the ministry the right to "control" the final results.

But Asfour sees it differently. "We do not 'control' anything; we are the body which receives the nominations, goes through the bio-data of the nominees and then transfers them to the voting committee."

The committee includes such prominent figures as Naguib Mahfouz, Aisha Abdel-Rahman and Lutfi El-Kholi. However, such a committee, Asfour added, would never be able to reach a complete consensus. "There are generation gaps, cultural and political differences and various schools of thought, which is part of our rich cultural life. How could these people ever all agree?" Some had applauded Mustafa Mahmoud's award, while others were disappointed. But this was only to be expected, argued Asfour, in a diverse society "where some people even consider a great laureate like Mahfouz as an infidel".

Critic Mahmoud Amin El-Alem, while agreeing that the selection was an improvement on previous years, maintained that this year's selection "should have been better". The Higher Cultural Council, he said, should not have followed the habit of "balancing the award winners" — selecting both secularists and Islamists, for example. However, he hailed Fuad's Zakaria's selection as a "genuine appreciation" of the man.

Two years ago the awards came under fire in the national press because some of them had gone to cabinet ministers and other official figures, in what seemed to be exercises in back-slapping and flattery. Compared to the early years of the awards in the sixties — "the golden age of modern Egyptian culture" — when the honours went to people such as Zaki Naguib Mahmoud, Abdel-Rahman El-Sharawi and Zaki Tulaimat.

But this year's prizes might be an attempt to restore the golden age of the state's merit and incentive awards, especially as most of the recipients are at the peak of their careers. "We are in a strange transitional era" says El-Alem, "where things are changing and unclear, but we have every reason to be optimistic."

Edited by Wadie Kirolos

## Al-Ahram: A Diwan of contemporary life

On Thursday, 15 March 1900, seven officers of the Egyptian army were brought, under heavy guard, into the main reception hall in Abdin Palace, where they remained standing until Khedive Abbas Helmi II appeared. After a short time, His Royal Highness entered into the company of the minister of war, the deputy sirdar of the Egyptian army and a number of senior generals. The celebration the khedive delivered to these officers marks the conclusion of a relatively unknown chapter in Egyptian history.

He told them: "I summoned you before me today in order to inform you of my grave distress at your deeds. You have brought disgrace to the Egyptian army and you have therefore been expelled from the military service in which you are no longer fit to serve. I have issued the orders to strip you of your ranks and medals so that it may be known that I always support the sirdar and approve of everything he has done to improve the system of the Egyptian army."

The seven officers so castigated were captains Mahmoud Effendi Mukhtar and Hassan Effendi Labib, first lieutenants Mustafa Effendi Lutfi, Saleh Effendi Zaki and Mohamed Effendi Tawfik, and second lieutenants Ahmed Effendi Shaker and Abdel-Hamid Effendi Shukri.

This "occurrence" to which the khedive referred had preoccupied public opinion over the previous two months. However, before learning the nature of this "occurrence", we must review the circumstances that prevailed during the last year of the 19th century.

After the Anglo-Egyptian expedition succeeded in recapturing Sudan, most of the Egyptian army was relocated to Omdurman in northern Sudan. Organised in a manner that would guarantee the British the greatest control, the army consisted of soldiers of Sudanese or Egyptian peasant origin, junior officers from the Egyptian middle class and senior officers, mostly British with a minority from Egypt's Turkish aristocracy.

Hardly had the British regained Sudan than they entered the Boer War in South Africa, or the Transvaal War as *Al-Ahram* referred to it. After numerous setbacks, the British decided to call in Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, who had been sirdar of the Egyptian army. Kitchener's successes in the campaign to bring down the Mahdist regime were considered to have given him extensive expertise in the art of military conflict in the African arena.

Concurrent with these developments was the nascent Egyptian nationalist movement which gained momentum after Mustafa Kamel began publication of *Al-Liwa* (The Banner) in January 1900. *Al-Liwa* launched a vehement campaign against the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement of 1899 and on 19 January, the newspaper appeared under a black to mourn the first anniversary of this agreement. The first anniversary of this agreement had a profound effect on public opinion, particularly on those mid-level officers of Egyptian mid-

dle class origin.

Against this background, we turn to the "occurrence" that precipitated the discharge of seven Egyptian officers.

We get our first glimpse of the story in *Al-Ahram* of 2 February 1900. *Al-Ahram*'s article is based on reports that appeared in three other national newspapers. It first cited a report that appeared in *Al-Muqattam* under the headline "Soldiers' mutiny" to the effect that the Ministry of War had issued orders to strip Egyptian army soldiers stationed in Omdurman of their arms. After refusing to comply at first, two Sudanese battalions eventually turned in their weapons. *Le Progrès Egyptien*'s version, cited in *Al-Ahram*, was slightly different. *Le Progrès* reported that soldiers in Omdurman had violated military regulations, provoking army officers to take the precaution of ordering them to hand in their weapons. Two battalions refused at first and then complied. According to the *Egyptian Gazette*, however, the officers ordered the soldiers to hand in their weapons because the weapons themselves were defective and had caused several unfortunate accidents. At first the soldiers of the two Sudanese battalions misinterpreted the orders as a sign of mistrust, even though they eventually complied without incident.

*Al-Ahram* then offered its own version of the incident: "When we reported this arms stripping the soldiers of their arms a little over a month ago, we only made scant mention of it because intelligence sources denied it. However, people who have recently arrived from Sudan inform us that rancour has not only assailed the hearts of the Sudanese battalions, but soldiers and officers in the whole of the Egyptian army. It is little wonder that such anger and resentment have mounted. The British had taken their arms from Omdurman and sent them via Cairo to the Cape of Good Hope. This is the secret behind stripping the Egyptian soldiers in Sudan of their weapons, weapons that are not the property of the British but of the Egyptian crown."

That *Al-Ahram* put its finger on the true cause behind the "incident of the soldiers" is supported by the private papers of Sir Reginald Wingate, who had just taken up office as governor-general of Sudan only a month earlier. Wingate relates that, on 23 January 1900, the 14th battalion of the Egyptian army had rioted and raided an arms depot in Omdurman. The only way the British commanders could re-exert their control was to threaten that a large British force was on its way to the Sudanese capital to suppress them. According to Wingate, Egyptian officers in the Sudanese battalion had incited the rioting, in protest against the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement of 1899, against pay reductions and against rumours that, after their victory in Sudan, they would be transferred to South Africa to take part in the Boer War.

*Al-Ahram*'s suspicions were further confirmed by a report by a journalist "who is believed to be a German residing in

136 In March 1900 Khedive Abbas Helmi II expelled seven Egyptian army officers for their part in a minor mutiny in Omdurman after soldiers were stripped of their weapons. In this instalment of his chronicle of modern Egyptian history as seen through the pages of *Al-Ahram*, **Dr Yunan Labib Rizq** looks at a relatively unknown chapter in Egyptian history



Illustration: Makram Heneni

Egypt", as the palace confidant Ahmed Shafiq wrote in his memoirs. The report, which Shafiq says "distressed the khedive for several days due to the salient truths it revealed", said that the actions of the Egyptian soldiers merited praise, not punishment. They were just in their demands that their salaries should not be reduced to less than that of British officers. "Is the skin of an Egyptian worth less than the skin of an Englishman?" he asks. Moreover, the condemned soldiers did no more than to protest "the pillaging of Egyptian arms for use in South Africa. Yet you [the British] did nothing to punish the thieves!" Undoubtedly the German journalist's passionate defence of the Egyptian officers, "whose names should be etched on brass plaques in commemoration of their glorious patriotic deed", was motivated by German antagonism toward the British over the Boer War.

Having sensed these truths, *Al-Ahram*'s position was markedly different to that of *Al-Muqattam*, the Arabic-language mouthpiece for the British occupation. On 3 February, beneath the headline "The Affair of the Soldiers", *Al-Ahram* commented, "Some (referring to *Al-Muqattam*) refer to the incident as 'mutinous', in spite of the fact that it is really a question of the soldiers pressing for their rightful demands after extreme and petition failed. These are the Egyptian soldiers who were victorious in Sudan. Yet they have received no promotion and no increase in pay. They to add insult to injury, the British commanders ordered their commanding officers to perform the ignominious task of stripping them of their arms and ammunition."

The demand for just and equitable treatment voiced in *Al-Ahram* had, in fact, been submitted in writing to the sirdar by Abdel-Gawad Bey, commander of the fifth regiment. However, Abdel-Gawad was ordered to retract his petition, which "deeply

distressed and embittered his fellow soldiers and colleagues."

After having fought and won an arduous battle, constructed the railroads, built the governor's palace and the officers' club, "when the time came to hand out promotions and awards, the Egyptian soldiers had to stand by as others were rewarded". This sentiment, expressed in *Al-Ahram*, was shared by other newspapers: *Al-Mu'ayyid*, Egypt's first nationalist newspaper, and the recently launched *Al-Liwa*, which took the occasion to assert that the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium Agreement, which gave the British virtual control over Sudan while Egypt retained only nominal sovereignty, was little less than a catastrophe.

Indeed, from the moment it was signed, this arrangement for the dual administration of Sudan had precipitated growing disillusionment among Egyptian officers stationed in Sudan. A group of them formed a secret society called *Al-Murwada* (Amity) that began to correspond with prominent Egyptian politicians and the khedive himself, expressing their dissatisfaction with British policy in Sudan. At the same time, the offices of *Al-Mu'ayyid* and *Al-Liwa* were flooded with letters complaining of the circumstances of Egyptian officers in Sudan. The information that they revealed and the fact that they were unsigned suggest that the authors were the self-same officers.

*Al-Ahram* unequivocally aligned itself with the nationalist position. To *Al-Ahram*, the "affair of the soldiers", as it insisted on referring to the incident in Omdurman, was clearly an instance of legitimate resistance. Whenever possible, it refused allegations of mutiny, as was the case in an article that appeared on 7 February 1900: "The Egyptian soldiers and their officers in Sudan are not rebels or mutineers. They are distressed by the fact that they have

been stripped of the weapons for no sound reason, leaving them soldiers without arms, as though they were children gathered in the street to play football. If we were to picture those 20,000 soldiers stripped of their arms, we ourselves would be sorely troubled. Therein lies the source of agitation, but not rebellion or mutiny."

The rift over how to interpret the incident in Omdurman reached the pinnacles of power, pitting the palace against the British high commissioner. On 10 February, Lord Cromer met with the Egyptian prime minister and asked him to advise the khedive to issue a decree declaring the Egyptian officers rebels. Abbas II refused. To *Al-Ahram* the British demand stank of "pure politics", to which the palace refused to yield. Instead, Abbas responded, "I have therefore asked the sirdar to relay to all officers and soldiers my command to abide by the law."

This formula was unacceptable to Wingate. He asked the high commissioner in Cairo to seek a more harshly worded decree in which the officers would be declared mutineers. Abbas yielded to British pressure and issued a second decree, which *Al-Ahram* described as "more strongly worded than the first, although it still does not accuse the officers of mutiny". Lord Cromer was still dissatisfied, and perhaps in answer to *Al-Ahram*'s prayers that "political manoeuvring over this issue would cease", the khedive dispatched a telegram to the sirdar in Omdurman that would ultimately settle matters.

In his telegram, the khedive expressed his regret over the fact that the rebelliousness that was exhibited by some soldiers had not yet been resolved. He hoped that the sirdar would exercise his utmost wisdom in managing the affair and that the investigations would be conducted with exacting thoroughness. As for those officers who were charged with mutiny, they should be tried before a military tribunal in accordance with the military code.

In so writing, according to *Al-Ahram*, "the khedive has deferred the accusation of mutiny to the investigatory process", which brings us to the final phase in this chapter — the trial.

After deliberations with all the regiments, it was decided to form an investigatory board made up of a majority of Egyptian officers and chaired by a British officer, Brigadier General Jackson. The board also included the commander of the fifth regiment, General Ferguson, and four Egyptian brigadiers. The composition of the board inspired confidence in Egyptian public opinion. "No doubt the sirdar was careful to compose the board in this manner, so as to convey in the army his good intentions and clear conscience," commented *Al-Ahram*.

For a period of 10 days, there was a curious silence in the press over the trial. Then on 26 February, *Al-Ahram* published the Special Military Order Promulgated in Omdurman.

This 10-day news blackout before sen-

tencing informs us both of the speed with which military trials took place and of the secrecy in which they were conducted. The ruling itself used the term "insubordination", a purely military term that fell short of accusation of "mutiny" claimed for by the pro-occupation newspapers. It was further noted in *Al-Ahram* that the board's rulings "received the full approval of the government of His Royal Highness the Khedive".

The individual sentences against the officers themselves read more like a massacre. Captain Mohamed Effendi Mukhtar of the 14th Sudanese battalion was held "directly responsible for the insubordination that occurred in his battalion, and the board unanimously rules to discharge this officer from the service of His Royal Highness the Khedive". First Lieutenant Mustafa Effendi Lutfi of the same battalion received the same sentence. However, with regard to Second Lieutenant Ahmed Effendi Shaker, the board advised clemency, "in view of his youth and inexperience".

Moving to the 11th Sudanese battalion, Captain Hassan Effendi Labib was held to be the "major offender" and therefore discharged. Corporal Badr El-Nur was sentenced to be "stripped of his rank, placed in the disciplinary block for a period determined by His Royal Highness the Khedive and afterwards dishonourably discharged".

From the eighth infantry battalion, First Lieutenant Saleh Effendi Zaki was discharged and Second Lieutenant Mustafa Effendi Mohamed El-Shami's name had in "placed at the bottom of the list of seniority in the rank of second lieutenant".

Two days later, a second set of rulings was pronounced against other officers found guilty of insubordination. Captain Mohamed Effendi Helmi was put on pension and First Lieutenant Mohamed Effendi Tawfik and second lieutenants Abdel-Hamid Effendi Shukri and Idris Effendi Abdallah were discharged.

In the wake of this incident, British army authorities had to devise measures in order to ensure discipline within the ranks. Evidently their policy of "divide and conquer" within the army was unsuccessful. The "insubordination" proved that, even though Egyptian officers were put in charge of Sudanese regiments in the hopes that separate language and culture would keep them apart, the Sudanese soldiers obeyed their Egyptian officers when they were instructed to raid the arms depot. At the same time, the British wanted to ensure that the sentences against the officers would be a deterrent against future acts of insubordination. Hence, the khedive's summoning of the condemned officers to Abdeen to castigate them personally.

The author is a professor of history and head of *Al-Ahram* History Studies Centre.





# Rice ban angers farmers

A government decision banning the cultivation of rice in many areas of Egypt has left farmers anxious about their future, reports  
**Reem Leila**



No longer able to sow their wild oats — or rice, in this case, farmers are fuming about a government ban on rice production in some areas photo: Saad Fagg El-Nour

The Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources, in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, issued a decree on 1 May prohibiting many areas in Egypt from cultivating rice. The ban, which will be implemented in June next year, is due to water shortages, the government says. The government of Shariya, Behira, Kafr El-Sheikh, Damietta and Daqahliya are fully exempted from the government order, as are four districts in Gharbiya Governorate — Kafr El-Zayat, Tanta, Samanoud and El-Gharbiya — and one in Fayoum Governorate — Kom Osheim — because of the high salinity of the soil there. The decree reduces the area of rice-growing land from 1.6 million to 900,000 feddans. The decree has been opposed by some on the basis that it will lead to a sharp increase in rice prices.

Abdel-Hadi Radi, minister of public works and water resources, told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that Egypt's quota of the Nile's water is 5.5 billion cubic metres. This

amount should be sufficient for Egypt's agricultural, commercial, industrial and household needs. "How can the government provide about 240 million cubic metres of water for 1.6 million feddans of rice? When 9,000 square metres of water are needed per feddan, it's a massive amount of water. The government cannot afford this amount for the time being. We have to be cautious with water, because if we aren't, by the year 2025 Egypt will be suffering from a severe water shortage," said Radi.

The government plans gradually to reduce rice-cultivating land to 700,000 feddans by the year 2000. Those who violate the decree will face a fine of LE400 per feddan of illegal rice crop and 10 piastres for each cubic metre of water used to irrigate the rice.

Abdel-Wahab Ghazi, head of the Irrigation Department at the Ministry of Public Works and Water Resources, also explained the reasons for the ban. "Egypt's

agricultural land is divided into five areas," he said. "The decree bans rice cultivation in three areas and allows it in the rest. The present area of 1.6 million feddans is considered unnecessarily large, whereas 700,000 feddans will suit perfectly the quantity of water coming from the High Dam."

Egypt's 1995 rice harvest was estimated at 4.8 million tons, compared to 4.5 million tons for the year before. Wholesalers and farmers expect production to decrease drastically after the new decree comes into effect. But Saad Nassar, head of the Agricultural Research Centre, which is affiliated to the Ministry of Agriculture, disagrees. Reducing the area of land cultivating rice, he said, does not mean at all that production will be reduced. The Ministry of Agriculture will increase the productivity rate of each feddan from 240 tons to nearly 344 tons by using new kinds of fertilisers, he explained.

In a visit conducted by *Al-Ahram Weekly*

to Kom Osheim, one of the districts which will be affected by the ban, the farmers were unhappy. They want the new decree to be revoked. "The high price of rice helps us to pay our debts," said one farmer. "Most of the farmers take loans. Not being able to grow rice will mean all of us will suffer from the accumulated debts we owe to the Principal Bank for Development and Agricultural Credit."

Another farmer, Nasr Abdel-Fattah, claims cultivating rice is profitable, due to its high productivity rate. He sells his rice for LE1,200 a ton. "The rice stays only three months in the land, which means it is cultivated quickly," said Abdel-Fattah. "Cotton, on the other hand, has to be left for seven months in the ground and exhausts it."

Ibrahim Khallaf is a farmer who is worried about his land. "I cannot stop cultivating rice. The salinity of my land is very high. Cultivating rice washes the land. If I stopped, the land would be de-

graded," he said. For Khallaf, water shortage is not a good reason to stop cultivating rice. "I know why we are suffering from water shortages. Israel is stealing our water from the El-Salam Canal in Sinai. I beseech the government to stop this stealing so that we can cultivate our rice," he complained.

Another rice cultivator, Abdel-Rahman Badawi, appeared defiant. "I will pay the LE400 fine per feddan and cultivate rice in my land," he said. "My land is very small and rice is very profitable. So why do they want me to stop cultivating rice? This is unfair."

According to Salah Abdel-Wanees of the Ministry of Agriculture, the country's welfare is much more important than that of individuals. Those banned from cultivating rice have been told to grow maize instead. "Maize is nearly as profitable as rice, since it does not need as much water as rice," said Abdel-Wanees. "Talk about farmers not being able to pay their debts is

nothing more than ridiculous arguments. The farmers do not trust us. They think that the government wants to harm them, which is totally untrue."

Mohsen Tawfik, an agricultural engineer, suggests that the government should ensure that there are areas in which cultivating rice is permitted in every governorate. If this solution is not suitable, "the government has to make use of the banned areas to cultivate other crops that can be exported," Tawfik said.

Soliman El-Ashry, a rice wholesaler, believes that decreasing the area of land cultivated by rice will increase rice prices in the domestic market and deprive the treasury of the money gained from exporting the rice harvest's surplus. El-Ashry expects that rice prices will increase by not less than 20 per cent. "The private sector will rush ahead and put huge quantities of rice into storage in order to control its price. I think the government has to find a solution to this problem," he said.

## Healing textiles malaise

The deteriorating state of Egypt's textile industry remains a cause for concern to the government, and was the subject of discussion at a recent meeting of the People's Assembly's Industrial Committee, where Public Sector Minister Atef Ebeid spoke about the problems faced by 51 Egyptian textile companies.

Ebeid cited various factors as being behind the deteriorating condition of the industry: excessive dependence on bank loans — at a 17 per cent interest rate — for investment in company infrastructure; the concentration on producing low-quality subsidised cotton products; the failure to make optimum use of imported equipment; the recent rise in cotton prices, especially since today cotton accounts for 75 per cent of production inputs compared to 50 per cent in 1990; the 15-20 per cent rise in wages over the last few years; the long-time failure to compete in world markets; and the failure to keep abreast of latest developments in the world textile industry.

According to Ebeid, privatisation will provide solutions for these problems, however he urged the committee not to expect miracles, because "the textile industry in Egypt is still not in a position to overcome these problems in a short time."

The Industry Committee also reviewed a report by the Central Auditing Agency (CAA), on the performance of seven textile companies affiliated to the Holding Company for Cotton and International Trade (HCCIT).

The report emphasised that the new liberalisation policies, especially in the agricultural sector, have left textile companies in a very difficult position in terms of severe financial imbalances due to the rising cost of cotton. According to the CAA report, rises in cotton delivery prices from an average of LE300 in 1991 to more than LE500 last season has led to a sharp increase in production costs in HCCIT's textile companies. Worse still, the lack of financial liquidity, the modest marketing capacity, a historical record of large debts owed to banks, huge unsold inventory and severe technical problems have all conspired to bring about huge losses in six of the seven companies.

Topping the list is Establishment In-

The People's Assembly has recently turned its attention to the deteriorating state of the textile industry. **Gamal Essam El-Din** examines the problems and possible solutions

dustrial Pour La Soie et Le Cotonis (ESCO). According to the report, ESCO has registered total losses over the last four years amounting to a staggering LE219.9 million. These huge losses have resulted from accumulating debts owed to banks, amounting to LE143.5 million, the failure to achieve any increase in sales due to the lack of coordination between production and marketing targets, severe technical problems resulting in the company only being able to work at 64.8 per cent of capacity, and the rise in the value of the unsold inventory to LE9.7 million.

Another loss-making company is Al-Nasr Spinning, Weaving and Knitting Company (Chourbagi). Chourbagi's losses in June 1994 hit around LE32 million, while its overall losses over the last four years climbed to a total of LE109.6 million. The company owes LE19.8 million to the National Investment Bank, and has unsold inventory worth LE9.5 million, while sales have declined by LE3.9 million. However, the report showed that Chourbagi's debtors list includes some private sector companies with LE3.8 million-worth of delivered goods, Iraq, which owes LE1 million, LE4.7 million owed by department stores, and LE187,000 owed by cooperative societies.

A third company cited in the report is the Middle Egypt Spinning and Weaving Company, which registered losses of LE34.7 million in 1993-4, while the overall losses in the last four years amounted to LE130.7 million. Once again, the CAA attributed these losses to the huge debts owed to banks (LE174.2 million), in addition to the outdated equipment at the company's factory, and the failure to recover debts for LE88.8 million's worth of goods sold to around 12 clients in Egypt and LE4 million's worth of

goods sold to Iraqi clients.

The only HCCIT company which secured a surplus was the General Jute Products Company. Due to demand for the company's product, cotton sacks, the company achieved a surplus of LE1.06 million in June 1994, although it suffered losses from previous years of LE4.5 million.

In its review of the industry, the People's Assembly's Industrial Committee also heard the points of view of various textile experts, from both the private and public sector.

Mohamed Farid Khamis, chairman of the Federation of Egyptian Industries and a private textile producer, asserted that the Egyptian private sector has recently achieved remarkable successes, especially in terms of exports of ready-made garments. "However, the picture in the public sector looks very bleak, and the deterioration in public textile companies naturally leaves a negative impact on the private ones," said Khamis, who called upon the state to find "daring solutions" such as introducing a fast settlement of these companies' debts, divesting them of their unproductive assets, providing easy and cheap access to cotton, and creating a good package of incentives to workers in the textile industry.

Mohamed Abul-Enein, a private textile and ready-made garment producer from Port Said, attributed the rising losses in public textile companies to long-standing mismanagement. Worse still, he added, because these companies have remained under state protection for over 40 years (in terms of subsidised cotton prices and available local markets), they had been quick to suffer the effects of liberalisation. He called on the state to find a fast solution to the "cotton equation", by allowing Delta-based textile companies to import cheap short-staple cotton from non-USA markets. The Agriculture Ministry currently bans Delta-based textile companies from importing foreign cotton for fear of transmitting foreign diseases to cotton plantations in the Delta. Abul-Enein also suggested that textile workers should be offered a new package of incentives and that small-scale private textile producers should be offered easy and soft-term credit.

## EU partnership debated

Leading economists, experts and officials came together last week to attempt to answer the question, "How Egypt can benefit from its partnership agreement with the EU?" This question was the title of a conference, organised by the Egyptian Centre for Economic Studies (ECES), where participants looked at various models of economic integration as well as the free trade agreement which the EU has already concluded with Tunisia and Morocco.

Pharmaceuticals and textiles were two main sectors in Egypt which participants debated as to how they will be affected by the proposed partnership.

Arvind Subramanian, resident representative of the International Monetary Fund, mentioned in a paper presented to the conference and co-sponsored by Moisefa Abdel-Latif of the ECES, that the EU agreement will have limited incremental impact on the pharmaceutical industry, mainly because this sector is already exposed to international competition since tariff barriers on pharmaceutical imports, whether from the EU or elsewhere, are already very low.

Concerning Intellectual Property Rights and patent protection on pharmaceuticals, Subramanian said that any change in Egypt's patent protection "should be assigned not to the EU agreement, but to the Uruguay Round's Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPs)."

In recent years, Subramanian explained, both foreign companies and the private sector have come to play a greater role than the public sector. He pointed out that the public sector's share of production fell from 70 per cent in 1984-85 to about 40 per cent today.

While foreign-owned factories produce their drugs under license from parent companies, according to Subramanian, only 40 to 50 per cent of the production of the local private sector is patented.

"Production under licence happens only because indigenous firms cannot buy the active ingredients from cheaper sources or because the technology and know-how are not readily available from other sources," Subramanian said.

The number of pharmaceuticals produced without patent is expected to increase over the next few years and will account for 10 to 30 per cent of the total market, Subramanian predicted. "This segment of the market will become vulnerable once the obligations of the TRIPs agreement have to be complied with."

He said that the short-term effect of the

Egyptian industrial goods may not benefit much from the EU-proposed partnership. In fact, they may be getting better terms within the framework of GATT. **Niveen Wahish** investigates

implementation of TRIPs is that prices will increase, economic welfare will fall and profits will go mostly to patent owners, which in Egypt's case are likely to be the foreign companies.

However TRIPs allows developing countries a 10-year transitional period for the local industries to adapt.

On the other hand, Subramanian said that the draft EU agreement requires Egypt to provide protection for Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in line with "the highest international standards." Subramanian said that this will not have any significant consequence on the pharmaceutical sector. However, he pointed out that "the draft agreement adopts the principles of competition policy that govern the free movement of goods within the EU." He explained that once the agreement goes into effect, these principles would also apply to Egypt.

Mohamed Abul-Enein, of Abul-Enein pharmaceutical industries, voiced the opinion of pharmaceutical producers saying that "the 10-year transition period granted to developing countries is our right, why should we waive it aside?" Without the time to gather the needed technology and conduct research, he warned, "We will disappear from the market."

Hanaa Kheiruddin, professor of economics at Cairo University, said that Egyptian textile products already enjoy, within the 1977 protocol agreement, duty-free access to EU markets with the exception of cotton yarns and fabrics which are restricted by quotas.

According to Kheiruddin, the agreement proposes the removal of tariffs and quantitative restrictions on the trade of textiles between the two parties.

She said that even if these quotas were lifted as a result of the agreement, this would not add much since these quotas were never met anyway. On the other hand, she added, these quotas guarantee Egyptian yarn and fabrics a certain portion of the market.

In the meantime, Kheiruddin explained, the agreement, when implemented, will not

only expose Egyptian industries to fierce competition, but the Egyptian government will also lose the tariff revenue collected on imports of EU origin. Moreover, she believes that the elimination of tariffs on EU imported raw materials may lead Egyptian manufacturers to import from EU suppliers, even if they are not up to standard.

The Uruguay Round Multi-Fiber Agreement involves the gradual phasing out of quantitative restrictions over a 10-year transition period. And although it calls for a reduction of tariffs, it does not eliminate them.

"The proposed EU agreement goes beyond the requirements of the Uruguay Round, which do not eliminate tariffs," said Kheiruddin.

In the EU proposal, Egyptian yarns and fabrics will enjoy duty-free entry into the EU market, whether the cotton or yarn originates in Egypt or elsewhere. However, the same will not apply for Egyptian ready-made garments which will only benefit from the duty-free treatment if the fabrics used were either produced in Egypt or imported from the EU.

Gail El-Zorba, a leading textile manufacturer, told conference participants that the EU-agreement is important for the textile industry, depending on the text of the agreement.

He expressed his discomfort with the rules-of-origin related articles saying that "The rules of origin do not offer any advantage to the industry. If they are changed they may."

Zorba stressed that ready-made garments represent 50 per cent of Egyptian exports of textiles which in turn represent 50 per cent of Egypt's exports of manufactured goods.

With these figures in mind, he said that the rules of origin in the current text are unfavourable to the Egyptian rising export-oriented garment industry. He suggested that the proposed agreement adapt the rules of origin as placed by the World Trade Organisation because "they are more liberal."

Stressing another issue, Zorba said that if the EU offers similar arrangements, regarding preferential treatment, to Egypt's competitors, then "we lose our comparative advantage and will disappear from the market."

Despite holding some reservations against the text of the agreement, Zorba still believed that the EU is an investment in the future since it will eliminate the cost of customs which would give Egypt, as a partner in the agreement, a comparative advantage over competition.

## EAB share sale

IN A MOVE designed to increase its capital by 20 per cent, the Egyptian-American Bank (EAB) placed two million shares for sale to the public on July 2. The sale of the shares is expected to add LE20 million to the bank's current LE100 million in capital. One quarter of the shares will be earmarked for the bank's employees while the rest is for the public.

According to Karim Onsy, senior manager of EAB's Retail Banking and Communications Department, the increase in total equity will allow the bank to expand its loan portfolio. In addition, it will increase the bank's "single obligator limit", which raises its ceiling on loans to a single entity. Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) regu-

lations stipulate that the single obligator limit should not exceed 25 per cent of the total equity.

"Going public," said Onsy, "goes hand-in-hand with the government's privatisation programme."

Each share will be priced at LE60, with a minimum of 50 shares per purchase required. Public subscription is scheduled to continue for a month but, if the offering is fully covered, subscription will be closed after 10 days.

The EAB, which has a paid-up capital of LE100 million, is jointly owned by the Bank of Alexandria (51 per cent) and the Amex Holdings Corporation (49 per cent).

## Vacation-land

RECENT statistics reveal that Egypt's tourism revenues witnessed an increase for fiscal year 1995-1996. According to an economic report published by the Central Bank of Egypt, the country's tourism revenues reached \$17.7 billion during the period from July to December of fiscal year 1995-1996, a 30.4 per cent increase over the revenue from same period the year before.

The number of tourists also increased during that same period, reaching, according to the report, 1.8 million, an increase of 19.6 per cent. Most of this increase took place last October and November when Cairo played host to several international tourist conferences. This increase included tourists from European countries, especially France, Italy, England and Germany. The number of tourist from Eastern Europe, especially Russia, also witnessed a marked increase. About 108,000 Russian tourists came

to Cairo, compared to 61,000 in the same period last year, the report said.

In addition, 26.5 per cent more tourists from the Americas and 22.2 per cent from Asia chose Egypt as a vacation spot this fiscal year.

The number of tourist nights reached 12.5 million during the period from July to December 1995-1996, an increase of 28.4 per cent over the same period last year, the report said.

Visitors from European countries topped the list in terms of the number of tourist nights, surpassing last year's figure by 82.1 per cent. Visitors from the Americas spent 41.1 per cent more tourist nights this year than last, and tourists from Asia and the Pacific rim countries spent 44.3 per cent more tourist nights in the country this fiscal year.

## Italy backs artisans

ITALIAN Ambassador Francesco Aloisi de Lardicel met with the president of the Artisans' Syndicate, Ahmed Abdel-Kader Ghaneima, on the occasion of the completion of the joint Italian-Egyptian professional training centre for woodworkers.

The project's goal is to provide young Egyptian students with the knowledge and technical skills necessary to successfully enter the labour market. After completing their training, selected students will be placed in firms operating in the field of wood production.

The cooperation project is part of the Italian government's general plan to fight unemployment and promote the private sector in Egypt.

A \$3.4 million grant from the Italian government was used for the centre's construction and teacher training. In the future, the syndicate will manage the centre's courses which are expected to draw nearly 200 students annually.

Edited by Ghada Ragab

**Lisez**

- ☐ Terrorisme
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# Walking with Arafat

On 27 June, Benjamin Netanyahu's chief political advisor, Dore Gold, met "secretly" in Gaza with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. It was the first direct encounter between the new Israeli government and the PLO leader. The next day — in a bevy of interviews granted to the Israeli press — Netanyahu declared that he would open "channels of communication at all levels" with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), including Arafat "if it is important for the state of Israel".

The meeting and Netanyahu's comments were viewed in Israel as the first cracks in the quarantine imposed by the Israeli government on Arafat since the elections. As Shimon Peres warned Netanyahu in his first Knesset speech as opposition leader, "I am not ashamed to say I walked with Arafat. You will too". The new Israeli leader is likely to walk slowly but walk nevertheless, and for the same motives that drove Rabin to shake Arafat's hand and Peres, at times, to hold it peace, and the complex relation peace has with Israel's notion of security.

The Gold-Arafat meeting was prompted, say sources, less by Arafat's charisma than by the being ignored by the Israeli government in favour of his deputy Mahmoud Abbas, with whom Gold had met earlier, than by reports from Israel's security forces of "a deterioration in cooperation" between them and their PNA counterparts since Netanyahu assumed office.

On 13 June, leaks surfaced in the Israeli media that

Security concerns dominated the first direct yet low-key encounter in Gaza between PLO leader Yasser Arafat and the new Israeli government, writes **Graham Usher** from Jerusalem

The PNA's Preventive Security chiefs in the West Bank and Gaza, Jibril Rajoub and Mohamed Dahlan, had warned the Israeli government that, should it "suspend" its cooperation with them and Arafat, they might "suspend" their persecution of Hamas.

Rajoub later denied the reports, insisting that, "under Arafat's orders", the PNA would continue the same security policy as existed prior to the elections. But the message was understood. On 26 June, Netanyahu ordered the resumption of Israel-PNA security contacts at the local, district and regional levels in Gaza and the West Bank. The next day he dispatched Gold to meet Arafat.

In Gaza, Gold reportedly assured Arafat of the Israeli government's commitment to the peace process, promising meetings between the PLO leader and senior cabinet ministers, including Netanyahu, "when necessary". But he also listed alleged PNA violations of the Oslo agreements which must be corrected if the process is to resume. Chief of these, according to Netanyahu, is for the PNA to demonstrate its recent "clear capacity" to combat Hamas and Islamic Jihad, not "ephemerally", but as "a matter of course".

The notion that the PNA's hunt after its Islamist opposition is either "recent" or "ephemeral" is certainly news to Palestinians. Nor only to them. On 18 June, Amnesty International published its annual report for 1995. And the chapter on Israel reveals just how little difference the Israeli-PNA driven policy of "peace with security" has made to Palestinian human rights in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israeli security forces, says Amnesty, continued to hold up to 4,000 Palestinian political prisoners during 1995, used "systematic torture" in their interrogations of detainees and killed 49 Palestinians, including several "in circumstances suggesting they had been extra-judicially executed". The only overtly about the report is that these absolute violations of Palestinians' human rights have been compounded by the PNA. In 1995, the PNA, says Amnesty, also arrested upwards of 1,000 Palestinians in the self-rule areas, "many without charge or trial", and was responsible for the death of four Palestinians while in its custody.

Since the report was written — and especially with the PNA's mass arrest sweeps that followed the suicide attacks in Israel, these abuses have worsened.

The PNA has currently in its prisons anywhere between 900 and 1,200 detainees, many of them interned without legal warrant or judicial scrutiny. Ex-detainees tell of appalling prison conditions with "poor food, no medical treatment and no access to the outdoors".

One ex-detainee from Gaza (who, typically, refused to be identified) describes how he was beaten with cables stuffed with wires every day for 18 days. "In the end I confessed I was a member of Hamas' military wing," he says. "I know others who confessed their wives were Hamas members. We would have confessed to anything".

The saddest result of the PNA's ruthless adoption of Israel's security priorities is how little protest they have caused, whether on the Palestinian street or, more culpably, within an increasingly pliant Palestinian media. But there are signs that the situation may be changing.

On 26 June, the head of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights, Dr Eyad Sarraj, was released after spending 16 days in PNA custody. For Sarraj's lawyer, Khader Shkirat, the fact that the PNA quietly dropped the "drugs"

and "assault" charges brought against his client vindicates the view that the real cause behind Sarraj's detention was his outspoken criticism of the PNA's human rights record.

But, says Shkirat, the release would not have occurred had it not been for the Palestinian High Court demanding from the PNA the reasons for Sarraj's arrest, pressure exerted on Arafat by members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and a handful of Palestinian non-governmental organisations which raised Sarraj's case publicly. A similar coalition is being built to demand the release of 10 Palestinian students from Birzeit University who have been detained in PNA prisons without charges or trial for over 100 days. The Palestinian High Court has requested a written explanation from the PNA's interior minister as to why the students are still being held. The PNA's interior minister is Yasser Arafat.

The Gold meeting and the Palestinian High Court's rulings reveal precisely Arafat's dilemma in the new Likud era. On the one hand, the PLO leader may be convinced that the only way he can proceed towards statehood is by demonstrating to Likud (as he demonstrated to Labour) that he and the PNA are "sound" on Israel's security needs. On the other — and as long as he bases the PNA's security policies exclusively on these needs — the struggle in the self-rule areas is likely to be less for a state than about the kind of state it is.

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## Peace stalemate spells Lebanese disaster

The fate of South Lebanon remains hostage to regional developments and the upcoming American elections, reports **Zeina Khodr** from Beirut

The region is at a dangerous crossroads with Israel's new Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu holding on to his hard-line peace policies and the Arabs insisting Israel must respect the principle of exchanging land for peace. The current stalemate in the Middle East peace process bodes ill for Lebanon which, when things go wrong in the region, often pays the price.

The dramatic political changes in the region may have far-reaching repercussions. Arab-Israeli peace negotiations are frozen and the possibility of them resuming in the near future seems remote. The current stalemate makes Lebanon, particularly the south, the biggest loser.

Emile Khoury, a columnist in the conservative daily *Al-Nahar*, predicted five possibilities if the stalemate continues: "Either the peace process will be frozen and Lebanon will have to bear the consequences of the stalemate which will be reflected in the situation in the south. The region would enter a state of 'no war, no peace' which would please Israel since it will continue to occupy Arab lands and expand settlements. The cycle of violence and ex-

termism may increase in the area, deteriorating the regional security situation. Resistance activities against Israel in the south and attacks inside Israel proper might escalate prompting Netanyahu to carry out a large scale military operation. Or Arab unity may result in internal division in Israel and lead to the collapse of the present hardline government."

Meanwhile, the military situation in southern Lebanon and the western Bekaa continues to deteriorate in spite of the April ceasefire understanding.

Israeli warplanes rocketed a base belonging to the anti-Arafat Palestinian National Liberation Organisation in the eastern Bekaa Valley, just seven kilometres away from the Syrian border. The group, headed by former Fatah Colonel Abu Moussa, had claimed responsibility for an attack which killed three Israeli soldiers in the West Bank last week. Days earlier, the resistance carried out eight attacks in one day against Israeli troops and their allied militia in the zone they occupy in South Lebanon. Israel responded by shelling a number of villages in the south.

The escalation raises the question of how the Likud gov-

ernment will deal with Lebanon. Western sources were quoted by the local press as saying that an Israeli military strike is eminent in the next few months while others ruled out the possibility until after the American elections in November.

According to Ghassan Mukkhal, the head of the international desk at the leftist daily *Al-Safir*, the region is passing through a wait-and-see period until Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu maps out a clear policy. "I do not think Israel will carry out a large-scale attack against Lebanon at the present. Netanyahu has no clear-cut policy yet. We are all waiting to find out what it is, especially vis-à-vis Lebanon which he has not talked much about. We also have to wait for the American elections and maybe only after they are held will Netanyahu declare his true policy."

Commenting on the flare-up in the south, the American ambassador to Lebanon, Richard Jones, said he anticipated more violence despite a call for calm. "I think the situation in the south is very serious. I don't think violence in the south benefits any of the parties' inter-

ests. But this is a disagreement we've had for some time and I expect unfortunately that it will continue. The situation will become clearer after Netanyahu's visit to Washington next week," he said.

Speculation has been floating around in the local media for the past week about a possible surprise Israeli pull-out from South Lebanon and the western Bekaa. This scenario, which has been reportedly on the negotiating table in the United States, ultimately aims at cornering Syria.

This proposal was supposedly propounded to the American administration by a research institution in the US before former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated last November when Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations were derailed. The aim was to corner Syria and take away its trump card — South Lebanon (Syria is the main power broker in Lebanon). It would be an attractive option for Israel. Netanyahu will be able to build an image of a peacemaker and Israel will be able to achieve its long-time goal — to separate the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of negotiations with Israel," according

to a local daily.

But most observers here do not believe a surprise withdrawal will take place. "Israel has the problem of finding some sort of arrangement for its proxy militia in the south, the so-called South Lebanon Army. They cannot just withdraw and abandon them. Israel also has to worry about its security," Rajah Khoury, a columnist said.

Mukkhal also down played the speculation of an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, saying that Israel will not leave without anything in return. "Talk of a surprise Israeli withdrawal is nonsense for many reasons. The Likud government considers a pull-out an important card in negotiations with Syria. It just won't leave without any benefits. Israel won't withdraw without an agreement with Lebanon and Syria because it wants security guarantees not just promises. Also, a pull-out without a peace treaty or some kind of an agreement would spell victory for the resistance movement. It would make Syria's position in the Arab world strong since it succeeded to liberate land without making any concessions to Israel."

Whether or not reports of an Israeli pull-out are founded, it is highly unlikely that any major development will occur before the November elections in the United States. The Netanyahu government must also make clear its stance because if it insists on its hardline position, it may destroy the peace process. This Israeli intransigence is being confronted by extensive inter-Arab contacts.

The Arabs are stressing the peace process must remain based on the principle of exchanging land for peace. Netanyahu has ruled out exchanging land for peace and called for talks without prior conditions. "Negotiations with Israel will not resume unless they are based on the land for peace formula," Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Boueiz said.

The upcoming period is expected to be precarious. The fate of the five-year old Arab-Israeli peace process will be determined in the wake of the decisions and policies adopted by the concerned parties in the near future. In the interim, South Lebanon will remain hostage to regional developments and the upcoming American elections.



The remains of a shelled Palestinian guerrilla base in southeast Lebanon

## Turkey's shifting bedfellows

Turkey's moderate Islamic force is a hair's breadth away from power, writes **Samia Nkrumah**

On 8 July the Turkish parliament will decide the fate of its first Islamic prime minister. Barring a no confidence vote, Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the pro-Islamist Welfare Party (Refah), will head a coalition government for the next two years.

But all is not well with Refah's partner, the right-wing True Path Party (DYP) headed by Tansu Ciller, who is now deputy prime minister and foreign minister in the Refah-DYP coalition. In two years' time, she is set to become prime minister under a four-year rotating premiership. But this prospect now looks uncertain.

This week, the Turkish media, dominated by secularists, was rife with speculation that the DYP members of parliament opposed to the coalition deal will block the newly formed government's rise to power. So far, eight DYP deputies have resigned from the party in protest at Ciller's deal with the Islamists, and around 20 more are opposed to the new coalition.

A number of DYP rejectionists have defected to former Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's Motherland Party (ANAP) whose own coalition with the DYP stopped after only 100 days in office due to the personal rivalry between Ciller and Yilmaz.

Refah and the DYP have 288 seats in parliament (158 and 134 seats respectively). If the number of defections increases, the balance could further tip in favour of the rejectionists.

There are other forces to be reckoned with. The Grand Unity Party (BBP) with seven seats in parliament could be instrumental in blocking the confidence vote. The BBP is an ultra-nationalist block known for its pro-Refah tendencies, but it opposes shelving corruption probes against Ciller. The BBP will back the government if its members are promised certain positions. This would only further strain the coalition.

As things stand, "deputies in the 550-seat parliament are evenly divided between those who support the newly formed government and those who oppose it", wrote the *Turkish Daily News*. Against these threatening obstacles to

his rise to power, it is little wonder that Erbakan is treading carefully. When revealing the coalition government's programme, he conspicuously left out Refah's vehement criticisms of Turkey's pro-Western stance.

In the aftermath of the coalition deal, Erbakan's statements could hardly be distinguished from those of the secular parties. Recently, Erbakan has not reiterated his dream of an Islamic common market, his pledge to scrap interest rates or his intention to review Turkey's customs union agreement with the European Union. Erbakan's compromising stance indicates that his assumption of power does not imply an end to secularism in Turkey. Rather, it spells the rise of a moderate, democratic religious party. It is this very moderateness which helped him win the largest share of votes in last December's elections in spite of the secular tendencies of the mighty military and financial forces. Secularists and pro-Westerners will take heart at his apparent about-turn, hoping that it will be easier to control the Islamists in a coalition government than as a political opposition. The DYP will act as a buffer against Refah's ambitions for closer ties with the Islamic world and steer the administration closer to its traditional Western allies.

For Ciller, entering a coalition with Refah was a question of political survival. When negotiating a coalition deal, Ciller asked Erbakan to halt the corruption charges which parliamentary committees are filing against her. Standing before the Supreme Court would put an end to Ciller's political career. It remains to be seen whether Erbakan will grant her this reprieve. After all, it was Refah, backed by the ANAP, which launched charges of corruption against Ciller.

Erbakan knows that he is taking a risk. His party fought on an anti-corruption platform. Many Refah supporters are not happy to see Ciller sharing power with their leaders. It was reported that Ciller received parcels stuffed with *niqabs* through the post.

But being the shrewd politician that he is, Erbakan is aware of his party's strong

points. The Islamists will control the labour, housing, justice, agriculture, culture and finance ministries. In this way, Refah will continue to do what it does best: appeal to the poor by maintaining its grip on the social service networks it promoted. Erbakan also announced that his government is committed to setting up a just taxation system.

However, by abandoning key cabinet positions such as defence, interior and foreign affairs, Refah has made unavoidable yet important concessions.

Erbakan's recent audaciously vague statements allow for more than one interpretation. His government will respect strategic treaties signed by Turkey except those deemed to be against the country's "national and security interests". Yet Refah has publicly opposed the military pact signed with Israel last February as well as the US-led multinational force based in southeast Turkey to protect the Kurds in northern Iraq.

This year Turkey has stepped up its attack on Kurds in northern Iraq. Last week, Turkish troops killed dozens of Kurdish guerrillas in a cross-border raid against a rebel base in northern Iraq. In response, the Kurdish Workers Party carried out its first suicide bombing this week, killing nine soldiers in a ceremonial parade in Tunceli.

Knowing that the military has the final say on Ankara's Kurdish policy, the Refah leader conceded that "the state's fight against separatist terrorism will continue with all its vigour". A seasoned political veteran who served in a previous government that was overthrown by the generals cannot afford to appear antagonistic. Erbakan knows that the military is watching him closely.

At the same time, Erbakan is keen to stress that Turks and Kurds are all Muslims and that he will try to resolve the problems through "Islamic fraternity". Like his predecessor Yilmaz, he has pledged a gradual lifting of the state of emergency in the southeast of the country. He will let the DYP, which controls the defence and interior portfolios, tackle the complex issues like social order and human rights.

Should the Arab world start worrying

lest Erbakan reneges on his earlier statements to review the Turkish-Israeli military pact and improve Turkey's relations with the Islamic world? Turkey is ethnically and geographically connected to Iraq, Iran and Syria. Refah's conciliatory statements during the campaign days have already earned the approval of its Islamic and Arab neighbours. The Syrian daily *Tishreen* said that Damascus was ready to resolve the problems straining its ties with Turkey under Erbakan's leadership.

But political analysts agree that Turkish reality means that the secularist principles on which the republic were built 75 years ago cannot be abandoned — at least not overnight. "The concessions Refah and the DYP made were their only means to attain power. Erbakan's about-turn could be viewed as an act of political manoeuvring," said Ahmed Fuad Metwalli, professor of Turkish studies at Ain Shams University in Cairo.

But Refah has not risen to the centre of power from a vacuum. It has capitalised on the right's failure to deliver economically. Turkey's crippling debts, mounting inflation and rising unemployment gave him an opening.

Secularism exists side by side with a strong Muslim tradition, which is rooted in small towns and villages, the focus of Refah's campaign. "Around 99 per cent of its population is Muslim. As in all non-Arab Islamic countries, Turks are strongly attached to their religion. Yet every member of parliament has to swear on oath to protect democracy and secularism, the principles of Turkey's first republic. On Turkish identity cards only the word Turkish appears; there is no mention of religion or ethnic background," said Metwalli.

The stage is set for a dangerous battle of wits in the Turkish corridors of power. Erbakan's campaign promises may turn out to be mere rhetoric, or he may be waiting until he is secure at the helm before showing his true colours. In the meantime, the Arab world waits hopefully and the West looks on cautiously as Turkey remains entangled in the ever shifting coalitions of its conflicting political forces.

**KURASAT ISTRATIJIYA (38)**

**Three Regional Spheres in Iran's Foreign Policy**

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The Secretary-General of the Vietnamese Communist Party Do Muoi acknowledges the applause of party supporters during an impromptu walk-about in Hanoi on 1 July (photo: Reuters)

## Tiger tales

The word from Sri Lanka is that Kumaratunga is on talking terms with her island nation's Tamils, but not with its Tigers, writes Gamal Nkrumah from Colombo

Sri Lanka is kaleidoscopic. Sometimes the island turns away from the sea and shuts up like a clam. Then again it is like an orchid adrift in the ocean. Sri Lanka's economy lays firm anchor on the country's Indian Ocean shores, but its soul has historically been closer to its central heartlands — a boisterous tropical bonanza tempered with Buddhist serenity. Temples like those of the ancient capital, Anuradhapura; the lakeside delight of Kandy with its annual Perahera festival; marvels like the Aukana Buddha, Adam's peak, where man supposedly fell from heavenly grace; and the tea gardens of Nuwara Eliya, towering 6,000 feet up in verdant mountains streaked with blood red earth footpaths, are all in the interior.

All these inland treasures are repositories for the ethnic Sinhalese majority's cultural heritage. The 18 per cent ethnic Tamil minority of Sri Lanka has far fewer heirlooms in the country. Its ancestral homeland is southern India. In Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers' war cries have been a clap of thunder reverberating through the island's tropical skies.

And blood, not carousing balmy breezes, was uppermost in my mind as I humped into General Anura Kumara Ratwatte, Sri Lanka's deputy defence minister and minister of irrigation, power and energy. I was on my way to meet his sister, Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, at her official residence in Colombo, Rosneath House, an elegant whitewashed colonial building set against crimson bougainvillea and ornamental palm trees. "We will talk with the Tigers only after we have tamed them," Ratwatte told *Al-Ahram Weekly*.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), at the height of their power, ran everything north of the town of Vavuniya where Tamil people predominate. Today, they have been flushed out of most of these areas. General Ratwatte told the *Weekly* that 70 per cent of the war against the Tigers had been "successfully completed". But the Tigers disagree. "The strategy of General Ratwatte is an old story," warned an editorial in the LTTE's official publication, *Puthukottai Puligal*. "He expected that when the north falls, the east will automatically fall, the north being the axle of the wheel of the struggle. The new story is that he is going to lose

the east also, when he is unable to swallow the north fully, even after using full strength."

Prime Minister Bandaranaike chipped in. She gave a blow-by-blow historical account of political developments in Sri Lanka and of examples of both the cooperation and the rivalry between the island's major ethnic and religious groups. Earlier in the week, General Ratwatte had unveiled a commemorative statue erected by the Sri Lanka Armed Forces at Getambe. It was an emotional event for the Sinhalese majority who constitute over 74 per cent of the island's population of 24 million. Getambe is a central Sri Lanka, is a historic place which had been the battleground for the sacrificing of thousands of Kandyan (Sinhalese) heroes in fierce battles against the Portuguese, Dutch and British colonialists. General Ratwatte explained.

Known to ancient Arab travellers as Serendip, Sri Lanka's history is anything but serene. Serendipity is key to the island's character. The Sinhalese, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the British, the Tamils, the Arabs, the Dutch chased away the Portuguese, the British cut the Dutch down to size and seized the beautiful island. The British brought Tamil people from southern India to work in the tea and rubber plantations betwixt the island's Sinhalese, naturally, were not work for peanuts — they were labelled as "lazy". The Tamils, were brought in as indentured labourers, virtually slaves of the British. The Sinhalese resented the newcomers. It is an all too familiar story of British divide-and-rule strategies that outlasted the colonial era.

Sri Lanka is a country that lives up to its exotic-eastern promise. The lush, urant and unspoilt coastline with its sprawling coconut groves, the turquoise sea, sharp green outcrops set against azure skies, the fragrant bougainvillea in every Buddhist shrine and temple, the women draped in colourful saris that match the mood of the island and accentuate their lithe and dance-like gait and steamy Colombo, teeming with shoppers and sellers, their sprightly strides in tune with the fast rhythms of life in a contemporary capital city. Sri Lanka is paradise, and tourists flocked in ever increasing numbers until bad publicity from the

Tamil Tigers' war hit the international headlines. Now the flow of foreign tourists — Arab, Western and Japanese — has dwindled to a trickle, and Sri Lanka's tourism potential remains untapped.

On her birthday on 29 June, Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga assembled foreign reporters at her official residence, Temple Trees. "I have made it clear that we are waging war against the LTTE and not against the Tamil people," she assured her listeners. "We have to redress the genuine grievances of the Tamil people. This is exactly the objective of the political package of the government." She then revealed that the Northern Province Resettlement and Rehabilitation Authority had been set up earlier in June, 500,000 Tamils had been returned to the northern Jaffna peninsula and citizens committees had been established to assist in the healing process. President Kumaratunga appealed to international aid donors to assist in the implementation of a \$275 million rehabilitation plan for this war-ravaged Jaffna peninsula, a former stronghold of the Tamil Tigers. She was serious about peace and poverty and unemployment lie at the root of the war.

Westerners were impressed. "This represented a major politico-strategic change in Sri Lanka," said a beaming United States Ambassador in Colombo, Peter Burleigh. Not to be outshone, the British high commissioner in Colombo, David Everard Tatham, promised President Kumaratunga that British aid will restore power in Jaffna. The Sorbonne-educated, Kumaratunga is a darling of Western donors. She is the only Sri Lankan leader in recent years to stress that the country has an ethnic problem. She is a woman to shy away from touchy communal issues. Kumaratunga has been reconciliatory to the Tamil Tigers in spite of new hostilities breaking out in the east and north of the island. "We need to win the war, create jobs and develop the economy," she told reporters on her birthday.

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, an ethnic Tamil himself, was just back from a tour of India. His tour included four south Indian states: Kerala, Karnataka, Andhi-

ra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu — where most of India's 65 million Tamils live. He talked with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi. The Tamil factor is the most sensitive issue as far as relations between New Delhi and Colombo are concerned. In Tamil Nadu, this is especially true; there are Tamil refugee camps there and the southern Indian state lies only 15km away from Sri Lanka's Jaffna peninsula.

LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran is a bone of contention between the two countries too. The name Prabhakaran strikes terror in the hearts of many Sri Lankans — Tamil and Sinhalese alike. The man stirs strong emotions and feelings of revulsion in India as he does in Sri Lanka. He is ruthless with both fellow freedom fighter and foe. He is notorious for his cruelty, his detractors say. He is said to have masterminded the assassination of India's late Premier Rajiv Gandhi in January 1992. He was officially charged by India for involvement in the attack. In India's Tamil Nadu he is regarded as something of a cult hero among Tamil chauvinists. There are today 57,000 Sri Lankan Tamils in refugee camps in Tamil Nadu and hundreds of thousands of unofficial Tamil refugees outside them. Thousands more are scattered across the world, from Britain and America to Australia, Canada and South East Asia. Kadirgamar discussed Prabhakaran and his LTTE at length with Indian officials and policy-makers. But, even during Kadirgamar's meeting with Rajiv Gandhi's widow, Sonia, the subject of Prabhakaran's extradition did not crop up.

Kadirgamar's visit to India came at a time when Sri Lankans are taking a serious retrospective look into their historical ties with their giant neighbour. Supreme Court head, Justice Tissa Dias Bandaranayake, is heading a team investigating why late Sri Lankan President Premadasa decided not to overturn his decision to give arms and ammunition to the LTTE. The move proved to be a grave mistake. To kill two birds with one stone, Premadasa armed the Tigers to fight the Indian troops who had been invaded by his predecessor, Junius R Jayawardene, to quell Tamil insurrection. Premadasa was hoping that the Tigers and the Indian forces

would wear each other out. Indian troops unceremoniously left Sri Lanka in 1990.

The unprecedented flurry of diplomatic activity in the Indian subcontinent seems centred on Sri Lanka at present. Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali was there last month to ask President Kumaratunga to urge India to resume talks with Pakistan over Kashmir and other sensitive issues. "The discussions focused on bilateral issues," Pakistani High Commissioner in Colombo, Turig Altuf, told the *Weekly*. Altuf, fluent in Arabic, is a graduate of the American University in Cairo and has fond memories of Egypt. "Two-way trade between Sri Lanka and Pakistan is worth some \$100 million. Tea, copra, rubber, gems and \$1 million worth of broomsticks are exported from Sri Lanka to Pakistan," he chuckled. On a more serious note he noted that Sri Lanka and Pakistan have always had close relations, in sharp contrast to the island nation's chequered history with India. In 1970-71, when India cut off all trans-India flights between what was East and West Pakistan, Pakistan re-routed all flights to what is now Bangladesh via Colombo. Again, in 1986, relations between Colombo and Islamabad were strengthened when the two countries conducted joint military training and exercises to counter a perceived Indian threat. Today, Sri Lanka is keen to play down any tension between its immensely powerful neighbour to the north.

India too does not want to appear overbearing. India's High Commissioner to Colombo, Shri. Nareshwar Dayal, told the *Weekly*. "All we want is peace in Sri Lanka." He added that the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka must be resolved politically. "President Kumaratunga's plan of devolving power to the regions is a bold gesture," he said. Dayal stressed Sri Lanka's need to reform its unitary state structure. Cooperation between India and Sri Lanka culminated in the July 1987 Indo-Lankan agreement. "The legitimate aspirations of the ethnic Tamil in a united Sri Lanka is the basis of the Indo-Lankan agreement," Dayal said. Tamil became one of the official languages of Sri Lanka after the agreement. In Sri Lanka, like in India, politicians worry about the Tigers' treachery. Few think that the Tigers can be tamed.

## Brave new world?

Second-hand Dutch underwear and cheap exploited labour: Faiza Rady heard about the realities of economic globalisation at an alternative development conference in Ghana

As the plane approached the Ghanaian capital, Accra, I was struck by the city's glitter. Its exuberant greenery, interspersed with sparkling whitewashed one-storey homes, gave it the appearance of a sprawling tropical garden. The rich vegetation was reminiscent of Siwa in Egypt, with its dense palm tree forests and lush fruit plantations. At the airport, people's looks seemed to blend into the ambient beauty; the women svelte and graceful draped in bright-coloured *boubous*, the men striking in their flowing white tunics. Unlike most airports, which are highly impersonal transit areas, this airport had a vibrant and pulsating quality to it — at one with the city and its people, or so it seemed.

I had come to Accra to attend a conference on the effects of globalisation on African economies. Sponsored by the African Secretariat of Third World Network (TWN), a non-governmental organisation involved in the research of alternative development projects, the conference focused on the increased marginalisation and impoverishment of Southern countries as a result of international trade treaties like the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Uruguay Round and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

On my way from the airport to the hotel, the signs of poverty and unemployment were highly visible. At each intersection, groups of youths crowded around the cars, waving a wide assortment of merchandise, and instantly established a sort of transitory, ambulant highway supermarket. Everything was up for sale in the interval between changing traffic lights and creeping bumper-to-bumper rush-hour traffic. American toothpaste, Chinese cutlery, Dutch second-hand clothes and Swiss postcards were frantically brandished at the mostly indifferent passing drivers.

"This is globalisation in action for you," commented Sara, my TWN hostess. "Between 1988 and 1996 the General Agricultural Workers Union registered the loss of 80,000 members, mainly because of land privatisation and the large-scale mechanisation of agrarian production. These workers now survive by peddling the imports you see here. We even buy second-hand underwear from Holland now. Meanwhile our national garment industry has gone out of business since the trans-nationals dumped their cheaper products on our market," she added derisively.

At the opening of the conference, development specialist Teteh Horneku defined the economics of globalisation, also known as the neo-liberal creed. "To the governments of the richest industrialised countries of the North (the G7), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the WTO, globalisation and liberalisation involve one fundamental project: that of opening up the economies of all countries freely and widely to the global market and its forces."

Horneku explained that the G7 and their funding institutions require that all countries adopt the same model, regardless of the nature of their economies, their level of development or their location within the global system. In this context, said Horneku, the G7 demands that all countries permit the free and indiscriminate operation of transnational corporations on their territory, open their economies to imports and concentrate on exporting what they are supposed to be good at. According to this grand plan, "the government's role is reduced to supporting the market and private enterprise, and leaving the determination of prices of goods, currencies, labour, as well as the allocation of resources, to the operation of the market," said Horneku.

Although most developing countries have been vigorously pursuing these policies for the past decade and a half under World Bank and IMF-sponsored structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), explained Horneku, the policies have yet to yield the desired results. On the contrary, the record has been dismal, he added, summarising the failure of neo-liberalism in the South. As a result of SAPs, 200 million out of 690 million Africans live under the poverty line — and conservative World Bank estimates project that current poverty levels will increase by a further 50 per cent by the year 2000.

"The future looks especially bleak for Africa," said Yash Tandon, a prominent Ugandan economist currently residing in Zimbabwe. A freedom fighter during the guerrilla struggle against former dictator Idi Amin in the '70s, Tandon became minister of economics when the coalition of progressive opposition forces headed by Yusuf Lule toppled Amin in 1979. After the coup against the Lule administration in 1980, Tandon and his comrades had to flee Uganda — eventually seeking asylum in Zimbabwe. At the conference, Tandon explained his vision of globalisation in an interview. "If we think that we can bring about change through 'democracy' and when we continue to believe in concepts like the 'nation state' and 'national sovereignty', we are totally deluding ourselves," he said. Tandon illustrated his point by referring to magical realism in fiction. "Imagine us to be living in the setting of a Jorge Luis Borges novel," he said, quoting political analyst Ignacio Ramonet. "In a far-away kingdom, some magnificent and cruel ruler, holding on to the attributes of power and isolated in his regal palace, hasn't seen the world slowly change around him. Until the day when his orders become mere noises heeded by no one because the centre of power had imperceptibly been displaced. And the magnificent sovereign's power was lost; he no longer ruled the world."

Tandon compared our lingering belief in sovereignty and democracy to the monarch's tenacious delusion of grandeur while real power had shifted elsewhere. "Not too far beyond Borges' fiction, the holders of contemporary power clearly state their case — all we have to do is listen and hear," explained Tandon, referring to financier and multimillionaire George Soros' recent statements about the market and democracy. "The markets vote every day," said Soros. "They force governments to take unpopular but indispensable measures." This statement was somewhat more subtly echoed by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali: "The reality of world power lies largely beyond the reach of individual states because globalisation implies the emergence of new powers that transcend state structures."

Citing an article entitled "The most influential man in the world", Tandon asked, "Who do you believe it was? Bill Clinton? Helmut Kohl? Boris Yeltsin? Not at all! It was a man who is most likely unknown to most people; his name is Bill Gates. He is the general manager of Microsoft, the software giant which monopolises the strategic market of network communication and controls what we now call 'information highways'. The Bill Gates of this world are more important than Clinton and company because it is their technology that has been instrumental in globalising the economy."

Martin Khor, director of the TWN headquarters in Malaysia, summarised the looming threat of globalisation and its implications for Third World countries. "Globalising the economy ultimately means transforming the fundamental macroeconomic and eventually social policies of countries of the South into a single monocultural laissez-faire economic model that would be compatible with the long-term requirements of the Northern-dominated world economy," explained Khor. Graphically illustrating what is happening, Khor recounted the Brazilian United Nations ambassador's outburst during the Uruguay Round on the issue of globalisation. "It is like we are a chicken being asked by the cook: 'With which sauce would you like to be eaten?' When the chicken replies it would rather not be eaten at all, the cook says: 'I rule you out of order.'"

Even the World Bank admits that the South, and in particular Africa, stands to lose in a big way if the WTO — which is still at the planning stage — is ratified. Based on projected global 30 per cent tariff and subsidy cuts, estimated gains and losses for the year 2002 indicate that of the \$213 billion overall gain, \$142 billion will go to the North, while Africa and the Mediterranean region will lose \$1.9 billion and \$1.6 billion respectively. "Once a country's government enters the WTO, that country is obliged to follow kind of international trade boycott that Iraq has experienced over the past six years," said Khor. Consequently, the WTO would transform Third World economies into reserves of cheap labour and natural resources — regardless of any government's economic agenda. Like in Tandon's fable, national sovereignty would be irretrievably lost, he concluded.

After the conference, I tried to escape globalisation and its insidious gloom by spending my last day at the beach — but to no avail. Having spent a good part of the day lounging around the pool of the posh and tropically quaint Lahadi Hotel, I decided to suddenly come face to face with reality once more. I had arrived at a gate barring the beach crowd from entering the no-man's land of business people and the Ghanaian elite. Appropriated by Northern youths selling Ghanaian handicrafts were attempting to create a national tourist industry, on the outer fringes of the booming inter-

## Africa on line

Nermeen El-Nawawi looks at Africa's links to the global information highway

Of all the gaps that exist between the South and North, none is growing faster than the information one. There are over 50 African countries, yet only 13 have the ability to access the Internet, a global network of computers, fax machines and other applications connected in local networks and long-distance systems via telephone lines, satellite links and microwave transmitters. The 13 on-line countries are Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Morocco, Namibia, Zambia and Mozambique.

The importance of information technology (IT) in modern business, industry and science is rapidly rising, a fact recognised by the African Information Technology Forum, which met in Cambridge, England, last September. The forum proposed setting up an African Information Systems Federation to link IT professionals throughout the continent. The federation would also work to provide appropriate training in the use of e-mail in Africa and lobby governments to adapt national legislation to meet the requirements of e-mail.

Similarly, at a meeting of the Group of Seven top industrialised nations held in Brussels in February, South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki urged the seven — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — not to exclude developing countries from the global information highway. As Reuters' Janet McEvoy quoted Mbeki, "It's clear that bringing developing countries onto the in-

formation highway constitutes a colossal challenge, but we have to address this challenge, if we are to promote economic growth." World Bank Vice-President Jean-François Rischard shared Mbeki's opinion, saying that the information highway could enable developing countries to streamline public services and expand education opportunities. "One computer hooked up to a telephone line could become a community learning centre," he said.

According to an article entitled "Africa and the Global Information Infrastructure" by Ernest Wilson, a telecommunications expert, the World Bank is currently launching a new programme using the Information for Development Fund. The fund will assist developing countries, particularly African ones, to restructure and reform their telecommunications activities. "The bank will also act as a broker between the government and potential investors in the design of new sectoral regulations and laws," said Wilson.

In the private sector, some of the world's largest corporations are constructing important elements of the global information infrastructure. AT&T, for example, has recently called for the creation of Africa ONE, a proposed under-sea fibre-optic cable system. As Wilson described, "The system would operate at three levels: trans-oceanic, linking Africa with other continents; pan-African, linking African countries together; and linking major African urban centres."

For Africa to meet these demands and get wired into the network, it has to overcome two

major difficulties. First, its poor level of electronic infrastructure. According to Lishan Adam, coordinator of a project called Capacity Building for Electronic Communications in Africa, the average number of telephones per 100 people in Africa was 1.6 in 1993. As Mbeki described, three-quarters of whites in the South African city of Durban had a telephone, but only two per cent of blacks there had one. "Half of humanity has never made a telephone call," he said. "The reality is that there are more telephone lines in Manhattan, New York, than in sub-Saharan Africa." Telephony in Africa, the weakest in the world, remains stagnant even if marginal increases in main telephone lines are achieved. Moreover, there is little private investment in the telecommunications sector. Lack of maintenance of existing equipment poses another problem.

The second difficulty is the high cost of telecommunications services. In Africa, institutions or individuals are charged four to eight times more than their counterparts in Europe and four to 20 times more than their counterparts in the US for the same length of call. There are conflicting views of whether the information highway will benefit the developing world. Experts anticipate the positive contributions to Africa that the information revolution can bring, by advancing economic, social and political growth, and improving the lives of ordinary citizens through distance education, tele-medicine and improved government services. Electronic com-

munications have been proven to assist in the management of crises and in the alleviation of poverty through enhancing trade and research.

On the other hand, those who worry about the negative effects of Africa being linked to the network say that most developing countries simply do not have the basic infrastructure to join the highways. Others fear for African national sovereignty, cultural integrity and the threat of economic marginalisation. According to Wilson, "If African countries cannot take advantage of the information revolution, they may be crushed by it. In that case, they are likely to be even more marginalised and economically stagnant in the future than they are today."

The most important job for African governments is to redesign key institutions to promote the information revolution. For example, more inter-agency cooperation is needed among telephone and broadcast industries and companies, and between public and private sectors.

Several of the connected African countries already have local nodal points to access information highways. For example, in Zimbabwe, the Mango network groups together 200 non-government organisations, researchers, and universities. In Kenya, Aareet links 150 university departments, United Nations agencies, government departments and non-government organisations to the rest of the world. Padiset in Ethiopia allows the 36 member states of the UN's Economic Commission for Africa to communicate with each other.



# G7



## Lyon from Colombo

The G7 leaders, at loggerheads over what to do with the world's poor at Lyon, created disquiet in the Third World, warns **Gamal Nkrumah**

The leaders of the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Canada and Italy — the so-called G7 — will go down in history as being notorious for their meanness. The seven-nation summit sidestepped the issues of poverty and debt relief for poor countries altogether. "Unto everyone that hath shall be given. He that hath not will have to sweat further discussion," the *Financial Times* succinctly put it, paraphrasing a biblical adage and summing up the G7 leaders' frame of mind. It was ironic, because the growth of Third World economies stimulates demand for machinery and equipment from the industrialised world.

The new international world order seems designed to stop the down-and-out least developed countries from reaching out for the crumbs that fall off the tables of the well-to-do. Lending a helping hand to the up-and-coming newly industrialised nations was also out of the question. Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Germany vetoed any reference in the final communiqué of the G7 summit to a proposal by French President Jacques Chirac to sell \$2 billion in international gold reserves to finance part of the debt relief for the world's least developed countries — mainly former French colonies in Africa. Cold water was poured over Chirac's notion of turning Lyon into a "development summit".

The proposal was not entirely Chirac's idea. Earlier in the year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) offered to sell \$2 billion of its \$40 billion gold reserves for reinvestment in Third World countries. "We do not want to discuss the sale of gold reserves," said Chancellor Kohl. "The Germans seem to be riding high on a winning streak. In London they won the 1996 European Soccer Championships and in Lyon they threatened to minister a 15 per cent

blocking vote among the IMF's board of directors. An 85 per cent majority vote on the IMF board is necessary for the sale of the Bretton Woods institutions' gold reserves.

Japan's unemployment rate rose to an unprecedented 3.5 per cent last month. That is nothing in comparison to France's which stood at the near-record figure of 13 per cent last week. The spectre of millions of Third World illegal immigrants literally smuggled across continents and scores of international borders suggests even higher rates of unemployment in the South. The phenomenon is symptomatic of the radical changes taking place the world over — namely globalisation.

Human smuggling is one of the most lucrative criminal activities in the contemporary world. Sri Lanka is a country that springs to mind when the issue is raised. The export of Sri Lankan manpower, or one may more accurately say womanpower, is the Indian Ocean island nation's single most lucrative net foreign exchange earner. In 1995, exporting Sri Lankan womanpower brought in no less than 42 billion rupees (\$1.5 billion). "Earnings from housemaids employed in the Middle East alone were greater than the net income earned from the export of garments," disclosed the chairman of the Foreign Employment Bureau, Colonel Nissanka N Wijeratne, recently.

Clothing and garments are Sri Lanka's main export earners, followed by tea, rubber, copra and precious stones. Wijeratne added, "While [Sri Lanka] housemaids in the Middle East remitted 21 billion rupees worth of hard currency last year, the net remittances earned from garment exports were 20 billion rupees." Most garment factory workers are women, as are the tea pluckers in the island's plantations.

## Summit sidetracks aid

Youssef Boutros Ghali regrets the sad fact that the G7 summiteers postponed tackling the Third World's pressing economic problems, writes **Ghada Ragab**

Despite strong demands by Third World countries, especially Egypt, that the G7 meetings assign more importance to economic assistance for the poorer nations of the world, issues including terrorism, trade sanctions and Bosnia took priority at the summit held in Lyon last week.

The importance of a concerted effort, led by the G7, to prevent the marginalisation of a large number of poor countries, particularly in Africa, at a time when the global economy is moving faster towards integration, was highlighted in the summit's preparatory meetings.

Representing Egypt and the Third World, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Youssef Boutros Ghali warned that delayed action on the economic problems of Africa could have a far-reaching global impact.

"The African continent is in need of a concerted programme sponsored simultaneously by the G7, the Bretton Woods institutions, the Paris Club, the United Nations and bilateral donors to address all dimensions of poverty and underdevelopment," Ghali said.

"Our task, that of the G7 and international institutions in which the G7 are major stockholders, is to ensure that cowerd in the 21st century do we lose irrevocably part of our planet to misery, disease, famine and a life of endless hardship and suffering," he added.

Minister Ghali called for the maintenance and expansion of existing mechanisms to channel assistance to the Third World, the continuation of development assistance from donor countries where budgetary considerations stand in the way of aid programmes and establishing mechanisms to resolve the debt crisis.

Although fixed on the agenda of the summit, development assistance and the resolution of the economic problems plaguing the Third World took a back seat to issues which have a more direct impact on the G7 countries.

The bombing of the US military complex in Saudi Arabia pushed terrorism to the top of the summit's agenda. The US came under fire from other nations for enacting legislation that would penalise non-US companies for dealing with Cuba, Iran and Libya. US Japanese trade disputes hung over the summit. Close to home, Bosnia commanded the attention of the European G7 members as they called upon donor countries to increase and accelerate their contributions to the war-torn country.

In the meantime, discussions on Third World economic assistance were sidetracked. Canada suggested selling off five million ounces of International Monetary Fund gold stock over a five-year period to fund \$1 billion in loans to poor countries. But Germany, concerned over an adverse reaction at home against such a measure at a time when tensions are high over the cost of monetary union, stood steadfastly against the idea.

Neither would the G7 agree on how much in debt relief to grant and their message to the Paris Club to increase the ceiling on debt relief was a weak one.

Furthermore, anticipating reactions from their home constituencies on why they should be alone in helping out the poorer countries of the world at a time of rampant unemployment, the G7 urged Asian and other emerging countries to take on a share of the burden.

## Japan for Ghali

At the recent G7 summit in Lyon, Japan pledged its support for Boutros Ghali's re-election. **Mansour Abul-Azm** in Tokyo finds out why

The economic summit of the seven richest countries in the world (G7) which was held last month in Lyon, France, was seen as an opportunity for United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to examine his chances of being re-elected.

Some of the G7 leaders, notably United States President Bill Clinton, had reservations about Ghali continuing for a second term after this December. Other G7 nations, notably France and Japan, the UN's main financiers, backed Ghali's re-election. Most Third World countries back Ghali since he is the first African and Arab to head the international body.

The US was once a supporter of Ghali. But that changed when the UN secretary-general published a report condemning Israel for deliberately carrying out the Qana massacre of Lebanese civilians earlier this year. His relationship with the US Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright, has never been good. They were trading insults long before the Americans made their decision to stop backing Ghali's re-election plans.

Most of the participating countries in the summit enthusiastically acclaimed the achievements of Ghali during his six years in office. Despite its well known opposition to his re-election, the US acknowledged his accomplishment in reforming and restructuring the UN and its worldwide peace operations.

Japanese support for Ghali's re-election is important. Although Japan is not a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the country is trying hard to secure a more active and influential political role for itself. Japan's economic success is well known; it has the second highest

economy in the world — second only to the US.

Tokyo aspires to have a louder voice in the international arena and in settlements of regional disputes. Recently, it has granted large amounts of aid to the Palestinians following the Palestinian-Israeli Oslo accords, assisted in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and offered to send teams to participate in preserving peace in places like the Golan Heights.

Boutros Ghali's relationship with Japan goes back to the '70s when he first visited the country as a minister in the Egyptian government. Since then Ghali has made a trip to Japan every year and on each occasion asks the country to increase its involvement in international activities. He has personally tried to calm the fears of conservative Japanese politicians about a more dynamic participation by their country in international activities.

It is clear that Japan has become emboldened during Ghali's years in office, shedding anxieties about being involved in international politics that have controlled its actions since its defeat in World War II. Since Boutros Ghali became UN secretary-general at the beginning of the '90s, Japan has contributed for the first time to international peacekeeping operations and passed a law allowing its military units to participate in UN operations in conflict zones.

Ghali and Japan are both keen on more Japanese politicians being given influential offices in the UN's agencies and departments. Japan feels it deserves a permanent position in the Security Council and there will be no better way of achieving such a goal than to make sure that Ghali remains at the helm of the UN.

## War criminal quits office

RADOVAN Karadzic bowed to international pressure and formally stepped aside as Bosnian Serb leader on Monday, turning his powers over to a hardline nationalist deputy, Biljana Plavcic, who has long supported his policies. But it appeared likely that Karadzic would try to continue wielding power from behind the scenes.

Carl Bildt, the international envoy to Bosnia, had threatened to re-impose sanctions on the Bosnian Serbs unless Karadzic was removed from power by last Monday. The international community has been pressing for Karadzic to resign from office and hand himself in to the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague to be tried for war crimes charges.

Karadzic is regarded as a main impediment to elections scheduled for 14 September, a key element in the international effort to stitch Bosnia back together after three and half years of war. Under the terms of the Dayton Peace Accords that ended the war, it is illegal for someone indicted for war crimes to hold or run for office.

Last Saturday, Karadzic was re-elected leader of the ruling extreme nationalist Serb Democratic Party which is expected to win elections in the Serb entity in Bosnia later this year. Defying the international community again, Radovan Karadzic's party has asked him to run in Bosnia's elections in September.

## Hong Kong democracy worries

ARMED Beijing police this week blocked eight Hong Kong democrats from handing a protest petition to Chinese leaders, triggering warnings that with China's rule exactly a year away, freedom in the territory might be in peril. The protesters were forced to return home after police carrying automatic rifles surrounded their plane after it touched down on the Chinese mainland, held them on board for two hours and confiscated their travel permits.

Other opponents of communist China staged a rally this week to mark the 365-day countdown to Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty after more than 150 years of British rule. Democrats who fear the 1 July 1997 handover by Britain staged a march outside China's representative office in Hong Kong and held a candlelight vigil outside the legislative council that China has vowed to scrap.

The incidents occurred as China said it would press ahead with its plans to bulldoze the colony's democratically elected legislative council, replace it with a hand-picked assembly and name a chief executive to replace the British governor, Chris Patten.

China has promised that Hong Kong can keep its capitalist system for 50 years under a "one country, two systems" agreement made with Britain. But many groups have expressed doubts, strengthened by recent confusing statements by Beijing officials, about China's intentions.

The island of Hong Kong was a collection of sleepy fishing villages and pirate hangouts when Britain seized it in 1841 after defeating China in war. It is now a jewel of skyscrapers, industry and high finance, with a population of 6.3 million.

## Politburo underlines vigilance

VIETNAM'S ruling Communist Party named a new Politburo with the same top three leaders as before — General Secretary Do Muoi, President Le Duc Anh and Premier Vo Van Kiet — but more members from the security forces. The leadership line-up reinforced themes that had already emerged from the party's four-day congress: continuity and vigilance.

General Secretary Do Muoi, appointed to a second five-year term, called it a "congress of continued reform". It endorsed further efforts to integrate Vietnam into the world community and liberalise the economy.

But speakers also warned against threats to party power from home and abroad. They said corruption and widening urban-rural income gaps could trigger discontent, and foreign ideas could subvert socialism. The congress appointed a new 170-member Central Committee and 18-member Politburo, both slightly younger overall than before. Six of the Politburo members, however, are from the military and police — an increase of two — giving the body a conservative cast.

Party officials have said the three top leaders may retire in the second half of next year, rather than serve full second terms, if agreement can be reached on successors. The internal party debate over leadership and policy took place in private before the congress, which was scripted to be a show of unity.

Compiled by Heba Samir

# China and US avert trade war

The trade war between Washington and Beijing was warded off because the US turned a blind eye to China's human rights record and overlooked political differences, writes **Sayed Awad**

An all-out commercial war between the United States and China was averted last month thanks to a last-minute agreement between the two economic giants. Tough negotiations from 17 May to 17 June between acting US trade representative in China, Charlene Barshefsky, and Chinese Vice-Premier Li Lanqing eventually achieved a positive result.

China pledged to close factories involved in piracy operations and open up its market to original products. Fifteen out of the country's 20 factories that manufacture compact discs are being shut down. It will also organise security campaigns to arrest those who violate copyright laws and step up surveillance measures to prevent pirated goods from being exported to neighbouring Asian countries.

In return, US President Bill Clinton renewed China's most favoured nation status. Beijing also urged the US to fulfil the promises it made in the trade talks and assist China in gaining membership of the World Trade Organisation.

The last-minute agreement signifies that important progress has been made, but it does not mean that the disagreement between the two nations has been completely resolved. China did not submit to a US demand that joint projects be established for supervising cultural products such as films and books. Beijing wants to maintain its cultural sovereignty.

The conflict between Washington and Beijing reached a height during the last two months, after the US set 17 June as the deadline for China to take action. The US was ready to impose sanctions on \$3 billion dollars worth of Chinese

imports, including cloth, electronic equipment and other consumer goods.

In retaliation, China announced that it would clamp 100 per cent taxes on American imports such as cars, communications equipment, agricultural goods and vegetable oil, as well as suspending the import of audio and visual equipment including film, tapes and CDs.

The conflict stemmed from the two countries being unable to reach a decisive agreement on intellectual property rights, including publicity rights and patents on inventions, and commercial relations. The Americans claimed piracy of their products in China has cost US industry billions of dollars.

This year's crisis is related to another incident which occurred in February 1995. Then the US complained that it was losing a lot of money from copyright violations and announced that it would impose harsh punishments on Beijing, including raising customs duties on \$1.8 billion worth of Chinese imports by 100 per cent.

China retaliated by raising taxes on American imports and went as far as prohibiting many American companies from opening offices in China. Beijing also suspended talks with American car companies which were planning to make use of cheap Chinese labour and the vast

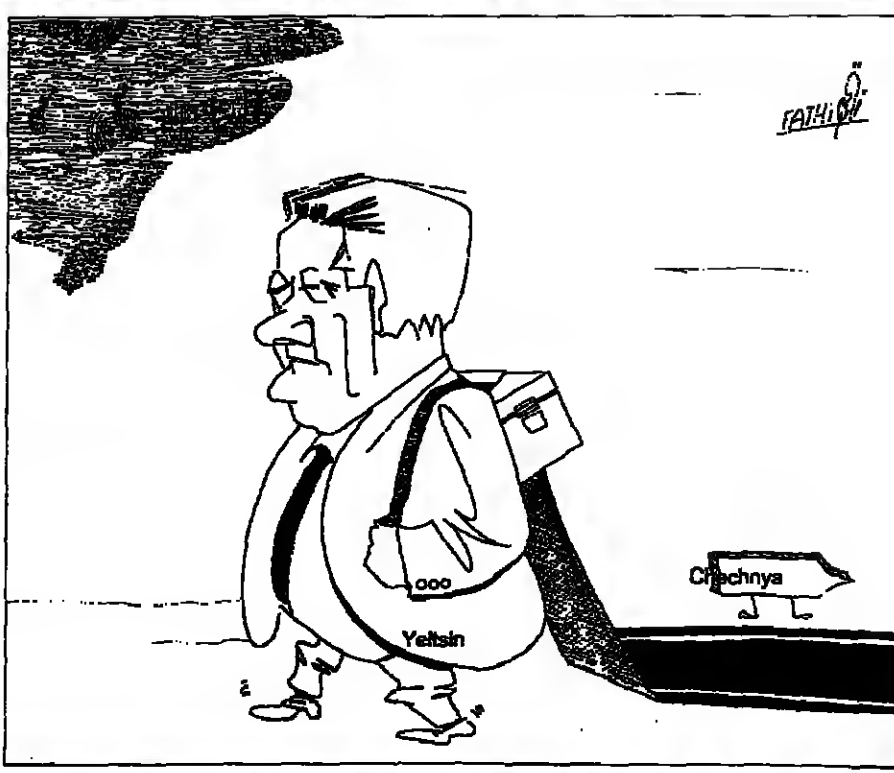
Chinese market in order to increase their competitive edge over Japanese products.

At the last moment, both sides reached an agreement to protect the intellectual property rights of American products in the Chinese market. Beijing closed six CD factories, some of which were owned by the state. The American administration considered the agreement a commercial triumph for US industry.

The crisis this year was settled when both sides realised the losses they would suffer from an all-out trade war. The American administration was nervous about its car and plane sectors and was pressured to be more lenient with the Chinese by the country's industrial lobby.

Beijing, for its part, was faced with the fact that the American market absorbs 40 per cent of its exports and that the US is the third largest investor in China. The Chinese are also reliant on American technology and need to attract as much foreign investment as they can to spend a planned \$1,000 billion on infrastructure by the end of the decade.

The US cannot, in turn, neglect China's enormous economic potential. Washington cannot afford to miss out on the vast, growing market in China and to leave it as easy prey for European and Japanese competition.





## Al-Ahram Weekly

### Rhetorically speaking

On the agenda of the stalled peace negotiations in the region are issues such as the return of the Golan to Syria, making East Jerusalem the capital of a Palestinian state and the right of return for refugees. But, on Netanyahu's agenda is one issue — Israeli security.

Innately didactic and unyielding, Netanyahu has allowed one month to pass since his election into office without a single step being taken towards normalising relations between his country and its Arab neighbours. In fact, his only tangible step has been to launch a barrage of snappy sound-bites and extremist rhetoric at Egypt and the other Arab countries for holding the Arab summit.

As free-flowing as his glib commentary about the summit is his blatant disregard for the future of the region and his willingness to substitute ultimatums for action in the name of ensuring Israel's security interests. These he has placed above all else, including peace.

But if Netanyahu were truly interested in promoting Israel's internal security interests, would he not have already initiated the redeployment of troops from Hebron? Would he not have pondered, pouted and pontificated before grudgingly agreeing to "open channels of communication at all levels" with the PNA? And, would he have wasted valuable time laying down the condition that no conditions must be present for the final status negotiations for the sake of peace, secure in the knowledge that the only way to ensure Israel's security would be to undo the blindfold over his eyes and cooperate rather than retaliate.

This is the political reality he is faced with and refuses to accept. Using a recent attack by a break-off faction of the PLO as justification, Israel has launched yet another air assault on southern Lebanon, once again turning this country into the chessboard for its power struggle, taking the battle to the field instead of the negotiating table. If Netanyahu is committed to anything, then it is to ignoring the advice of some members of his cabinet and eschewing any tangible effort to promote anything but his self-serving interests.

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# The new realpolitik

The Middle East is subject to an array of new realities, a situation which, Ibrahim Nafie argues, Israel ignores at its peril



There can be no doubt that the election of Binyamin Netanyahu and the rise to power in Israel of the right-wing Likud will have major regional repercussions. Four years of negotiations with the Labour Party and its left-wing allies have seen political and diplomatic circles around the world become accustomed to dealing with a specific faction of Israeli politicians. Now that these people are no longer in place it is time to take stock and, more importantly, seek to create new circumstances to counter the changes that have taken place.

During this period of transition it is important that we retain our historical perspective on events that have occurred since the October War, events that have radically altered the image of Arabs in the West. During this period agreements were concluded to disengage forces on the Syrian and Egyptian fronts, constituting the first step in the peace process. In 1977, when the Likud came to power in Israel, a peace accord was signed with Egypt, creating the first framework for a solution to the Palestinian problem, or as Aza Patah, the Israeli foreign minister at the time said, laying the foundations for a Palestinian state.

This Likud government was followed in the eighties by a succession of "two-headed" governments in which the Likud and Labour parties shared power. But with the exception of a few isolated spurts of activity that quickly dissipated, the peace process was effectively frozen during this period. Then came the end of the Cold War, signalling a thaw on many fronts, and giving momentum to a dialogue that would result in the Madrid peace conference.

During this same period Egyptian policy, under both Sadat and Mubarak, has remained the same. Cairo has never been concerned over whether doves or hawks were in power in Israel. Its concern has always been to try and advance the legitimate demands of Arabs whatever the rhetoric of the Israeli government.

For example, Cairo was never once prepared to excuse the Labour government for its blockade of the Palestinian people, its invasion of Lebanon and its refusal to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, even if that would have helped the Labour government remain in power. Egypt's aim has consistently been to achieve a just and lasting peace in the region. Egypt has worked ceaselessly towards this end, engineering along the way new realities that no Israeli government could afford to ignore.

The peace process, which began in Madrid, is no longer mired in squabbles over the interpretation of Resolution 242. It operates within the framework of specific agreements signed between Israel and the PLO. There is no way that Israel can rewrite such agreements. In his campaign speech-

es Netanyahu may have compared the Oslo, Cairo and Washington accords to the Munich agreement that preceded World War II. Now that he is in power he will not be able to dismiss these accords with such nonchalance.

Nor have domestic Israeli politics proved exempt from the new realities created by Madrid. There is now a widely based constituency within Israel with vested interests in the continuation of the peace process, a broad coalition of forces from the political left and centre, including Israeli Arabs and Israeli businessmen.

The recent Cairo Arab summit has also created a new reality that no one in Israel, and few analysts elsewhere, had anticipated. Israel, as Netanyahu's extremist campaign speeches testify, has always banked on the Arabs being too contentious to unite. Any practical manifestation of pan-Arabism, they believed, breathed its last with the end of the Gulf War. Now, however, unpalatable they find it, the Israelis must reassess this conviction.

The Arab Summit in Cairo coincided with the Florence EU Summit. The latter, in its final statement, confirmed the position taken by the Arabs — i.e. that the Madrid conference and Oslo agreements should continue to set the framework for the peace process. The European summit called for all parties to resume negotiations on all fronts, and on all subjects, including the status of Jerusalem.

The Arab summit and the European summit created another reality which also involves the US. A week after the Florence summit, the G7 summit began in Lyon. In its final statement, the meeting of the world's richest countries also underlined the justice of Arab demands. "Now that it is imperative to reactivate the peace process, we urge all parties to abide by their commitments, particularly to the agreements that have already been signed, and to resume their efforts toward a comprehensive peace founded upon the Madrid process, the principle of land for peace and other principles cited in the pertinent UN Security Council res-

olutions." So read the G7 final communiqué. President Mubarak's visit to France this week, and Amr Moussa's visit to Great Britain, aim to capitalise on the emerging consensus represented by the EU and G7 summit statements.

As to how matters will eventually fall out, much will depend on Netanyahu's forthcoming visits to Washington and to Cairo. The result of these visits is likely to reshape the Middle East, producing a political landscape radically different from that which existed at the time of the election of Israel's Labour government in 1992.

Netanyahu has already begun to retract some of his more virulent campaign statements, particularly with regards to the Oslo agreements, the status of Jerusalem and his willingness to meet with Arafat. But does this imply that Netanyahu is contemplating a U-turn? So far, no. He may have softened on certain issues, but he continues to wage diplomatic guerrilla warfare, particularly against Egypt, to divert attention away from the essential issues. The fabricated Scud crisis is a case in point.

The new Israeli government is clearly being pulled in opposite directions. On the one hand it wants to adhere to its declared election platform, yet on the other it cannot ignore the new realities created by the Arabs. The Israeli government, however, remains in need of further prodding. Certainly we must be vigilant of Israeli attempts to derail the peace process through petty diplomatic machinations. Egyptian diplomacy is acutely aware of Israel's inclinations in this respect. Egypt's main task, therefore, from now until the end of the US elections, will be to continue to remind the world that at the heart of the peace process lies Israel's willingness to adhere to commitments already stipulated and ratified in the Oslo accords.

## A war climate once again

Mohamed Sid-Ahmed suggests that Netanyahu's policies have not only derailed the peace process, but threaten to plunge the region once again into a climate of war

Since Netanyahu was elected as Israel's new prime minister, a state of tension has gripped the Middle East, replacing the relative tranquillity which prevailed when the assumption was that a peace process had been set into motion, and that it could eventually deliver. There is a strong sense of déjà vu, as the region seems caught in a scenario reminiscent of the Cold War.

Everybody is aware that, in legal terms, Netanyahu is in flagrant breach of the basic premises of the peace process. By vowing not to return the Golan to Syria in exchange for peace, not only during his electoral campaign but even after assuming power, he is openly violating Resolution 242, the very cornerstone of the entire peace process. Even more critical is the climate of tension, hostility and mutual distrust that he has succeeded in engendering practically overnight, in total contradiction with the confidence-building measures that are an indispensable component of any project for peace.

Netanyahu's intransigence has led many to describe him as an anomaly in the new world game, a throwback to the Cold War. But before subscribing to this overly simplistic description, it might be useful to ask just what the new world game is. Does it already have definite rules, or is it a process still in the making, whose ultimate shape has yet to materialise? If we take the Russian elections as an illustration, it is clear that with the decline of ideology, it is authoritarianism, the idea of order in opposition to that of chaos, that is filling the gap. In a way, General Lebed, the candidate of the military, the man who can impose order by force of arms, has emerged as a referee between Communist candidate Zyuganov and President Yeltsin, the candidate who enjoys unconditional Western support.

Netanyahu too is an advocate of military deterrence, which he considers his main card in the negotiations. When he calls for negotiations without preconditions, he is actually demanding

that no restrictions be placed on his privileged position as the occupying power, in short, for the ascendancy of might over right. With his accession to power, the name of the game has suddenly changed. It is no longer how to make peace, but how to bully the other parties into complying with his conditions. This is true in Netanyahu's relations not only with the Arabs, but even with the US administration, Israel's closest ally.

Thus Netanyahu refused to receive Dennis Ross, on the grounds that he does not deal with functionaries, whatever their rank. He told Secretary of State Warren Christopher that he will inform him of Israel's position but will only negotiate with President Clinton. Netanyahu knows that his rival, Peres, was Clinton's chosen candidate in Israel's general elections. He believes that, if before the Israeli elections the American president had the means to intervene to Likud's disadvantage in internal Israeli politics, on the eve of the US presidential election it is now Israel's Jewish lobby in America, intervene with impunity in American internal politics.

The new Israeli government's bullying tactics with the US have provoked the US to retaliate in kind — but against Egypt, not Israel. The American administration has suddenly discovered that Egypt secretly acquired Scud missiles from North Korea which, if the allegation proves true, justifies cutting economic aid to Egypt. Simultaneously, the issue of Gaddafi's arrival to the Arab summit by plane, in defiance of the flight ban imposed by the UN on Libya because of the Lockerbie dispute, has also become a major issue that Egypt is required to explain. Finally, there is the virulent campaign launched by the US against Boutros Ghali, and the unprecedented threat to use its veto power to block his reelection. Even if the "irrevocable" decision to remove Boutros Ghali is not directed against Egypt, but reflects Washington's anger at the secretary-general's decision to release the UN report establishing that the Qana massacre was not, as

the Israelis claimed, a "tragic mistake", but a deliberate act of cold-blooded murder, it can only be seen as an unfriendly act by Cairo.

These are not the only signs of a deteriorating situation. The joint Israeli-Turkish air and sea manoeuvres have given the word "Middle Easternism", originally coined to express a purely economic venture, namely, the Middle East market, alarming military connotations. Indeed, they have ushered in a new era of regional axes and counter-axes, with Greece and Armenia, and possibly also Iran, coming together in the face of this new threat. At the same time, Netanyahu is sparing no effort to exacerbate inter-Arab divisions, showering Jordan with praise while accusing Syria of being a key actor in fomenting terrorism throughout the region.

Following the call for an Arab summit, Washington advised the Arab leaders to postpone its convocation on the grounds that Netanyahu's statements during the electoral campaign were not necessarily an accurate reflection of the policies he would follow as prime minister. Had the Arabs heeded Washington's advice, Netanyahu would have been free to continue his procrastination and conceal his deliberate intention to scuttle the peace process.

Actually, the Arab leaders were not only interested in the summit as a means of placing Netanyahu before his responsibility and proving to the world at large that statesmanship is unlikely to replace the bellicose rhetoric that marked his election campaign. It was also a means by which to stand up to the alternative logic in the Arab world which holds that the whole peace process was doomed to failure from the start. If such a logic prevails, this would be at the expense of all the advocates of peace in the region. There is today a race between two contradictory logics in the Arab world, that of the Arab regimes which are sticking to the peace line and that of forces which are resorting to violence to protest the manipulation of the Arab world. The recent explosion in Saudi Arabia is very significant in this respect.

## Pirates of the word

By Naguib Mahfouz

My publisher Al-Sahhar has, over the years, never dealt with me in anything but a correct and courteous way. However, no sooner is a book published in Egypt, or some work serialised in a newspaper or magazine, than one hears that it has been pirated and published in Lebanon or Morocco. This is not necessarily all bad; since there is a large North African readership acquainted with my works largely through pirated editions.

Piracy, though it represents a financial loss can also result in cultural gain. Often friends returning from abroad bring editions of my works that I did not know existed. I well remember receiving a letter from a reader informing me that one of my novels had been pirated and was selling in Lebanon, and that there were some differences with the version published by Al-Sahhar.

Once I actually signed a contract with a copyright pirate. I was sitting in the Café Riche one day when a tall Lebanese man introduced himself to me saying: "I am the publisher who pirated all your novels, from *The Absurdity of Fate to Miramar*." I asked him what he wanted and he explained that he wanted me to sign a contract entitling him to become my "official copyright pirate". Apparently, such was the competition between pirates that he wanted an exclusive deal. I was to receive my author's fees, of course. I found this extremely logical, and promptly signed the contract.

Based on an interview by Mohamed Salaway.

## The Press This Week Scuds and duds

**Al-Ahram:** "In his bizarre joint press conference with Christopher, Netanyahu has revealed his true intentions. With a mere shrug he has blown away all international resolutions (on the Arab-Israeli conflict)... ignoring the basic principle of land for peace and linking peace and security, overlooking the fact that security should be for all and not just for Israel."  
(Ihsan Bakr, 30 June)

**October:** "To be quite honest it is no longer clear whether the US is a friend or foe. Can it actually hold a principled and objective position? Is Warren Christopher really the US Secretary of State or a second Israeli foreign minister? And when we stand before the US and Israel can we clearly tell which is the opponent and which is the judge?"  
(Ragab El-Banna, 30 June)

**Al-Wafd:** "Which is more dangerous to peace and security: the Israeli nuclear weapons and advanced air force or the Scud missiles recently linked to Egypt? ...What is it that Israel wants from Egypt? To leave Arab lands as prey to Israeli encroachment and Zionist ambitions? And what does the US want exactly, after giving in to numerous Zionist demands? Egypt is not bound to appease Netanyahu. Egypt's decisions emanate from Cairo, not from Tel Aviv or Washington."  
(Editorial, 1 July)

**Rose El-Youssef:** "When Egypt takes the necessary stance appropriate to its strategic role in the region, a strange affliction hits US policy... It is as though the US master imagines that Egypt must submit to his demands or threats and never oppose his desires unless it wishes to face endless problems to the extent of threatening to besiege it and cut off all aid."  
(Mahmoud El-Tokami, 1 July)

**Al-Arab:** "We welcome the G-7 summit's declaration of war on terrorism... on the condition that matters should be clarified: the struggle against Israeli occupation is legitimate, the struggle to recover what poorer nations have lost is legitimate, the struggle to prevent the world from splitting into a predatory North and an impoverished South is legitimate... even if this is not to the liking of the US and its six partners."  
(Galal Aref, 1 July)

**Al-Ahram:** "US policies are quite clear and Americans have never hesitated in declaring it. They are for an Israel that is stronger than all the Arab countries combined, they are against any Arab force opposing it and they are particularly against a strong Egypt... So what is there to astonish and anger us when they remind us that we are not allowed to possess long range missiles? Only a few months ago they asked us to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, despite our insistence that Israel should sign as well."  
(Hassamein Kroom, 29 June)

**Al-Shaab:** "A new Israeli nuclear reactor at the Egyptian borders — a news item carried by osw agencies and described as an ordinary matter... Yet they are making all this fuss over Egypt's Scud missiles!"  
(2 July)

**Al-Mussawwar:** "Only a month ago the Israelis were talking about the US president acting as Israel's obedient boy! Now we hear that Clinton needs Netanyahu much more than the Israeli premier needs the White House..."  
(Mahmoud Mohamed Ahmed, 5 July)

**Al-Ahali:** "Now that the Cairo summit has brought the concept of Arab solidarity back to life, a plan of action is needed to bring it into effect. Unfortunately, the summit did not set any time schedule for such a plan... Time is the Arab's most precious possession especially when they have to confront the intentions to freeze or even sabotage the peace process."  
(Lotfi Waked, 3 July)

**Al-Akbar:** "Without a consensus on the land-for-peace principle negotiations are meaningless. The problem, however, is that Netanyahu considers the land-for-peace principle a threat to Israeli security, and, along with the Americans, sees the pressing issues as those of Egypt obtaining Scud missiles materials, Gaddafi's plane landing at Cairo Airport, Syria's support for the Lebanese resistance and the necessity of imposing sanctions against Damascus... Perhaps the communiqué issued by the Lyons [G7] summit will help Israeli leaders realise how far they are from the rest of the world... their language and stances do not belong to this age."  
(Nabil Zaki, 30 June)

Compiled by Hala Saqr





## Close up

Salama A. Salama

### Reading the danger signs

The communiqué issued by the G7 summit concerning peace in the Middle East was warmly received, not only in Egypt but by the whole Arab world. Behind this reception lies the fact that the communiqué provides the kind of international support that has, since the Israeli elections, been noticeable by its absence, most significantly in the US, which since Netanyahu's victory has been intent on facilitating Israeli attempts both to debate the neutral basis on which the peace process had been built and in resuming agreements already concluded with the Palestinians.

G7 summits rarely discuss international issues in great depth and there is no fixed agenda. These meetings are generally viewed as little more than a talking shop for the leaders of the wealthiest industrialised nations. It cannot be denied, however, that what emerges from such summits is a reflection of the thinking of the major powers. Statements issued by the summit merely outline common ground and the direction of general policy with regard to current international issues and crises.

It was always unlikely that the Lyon communiqué would deal with the complex variables affecting the peace process since Netanyahu came to power. What the communiqué did instead was to offer a cautious general formulation stressing the main principles on which the peace process was founded — i.e. land for peace, and the resolutions of the Security Council — while at the same time enjoining all parties to resume bilateral negotiations at the earliest possible date.

Many observers consider the G7 summit no more than a public relations show by the world's rich. And certainly, as is the case at all summits, behind the scenes negotiations tend to be of greater import than public declarations.

President Mubarak's visit to France, which came in the wake of the G7 summit, was made against the backdrop of Arab fears over the collapse of the peace process — expressed by the Arab summit conference in Cairo — and constituted a continuation of international efforts to rescue the peace process.

The bomb detonated at Dahran in Saudi Arabia has made it increasingly apparent that terrorist activity in the region cannot be dissociated from the atmosphere surrounding the peace process. Yet the American administration, has, it would appear, yet to take on board the extent of the dangers posed by the current situation and by the increasingly antagonistic campaigns conducted against Syria, Egypt and the Palestinian National Authority by the Jewish lobby in America.

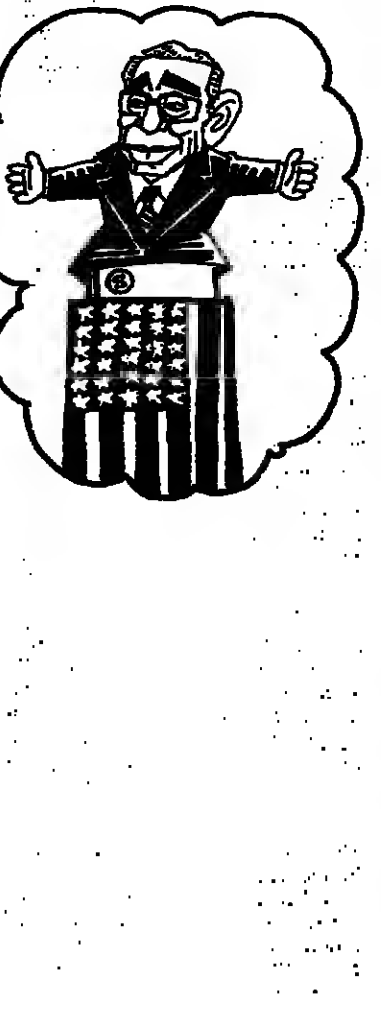
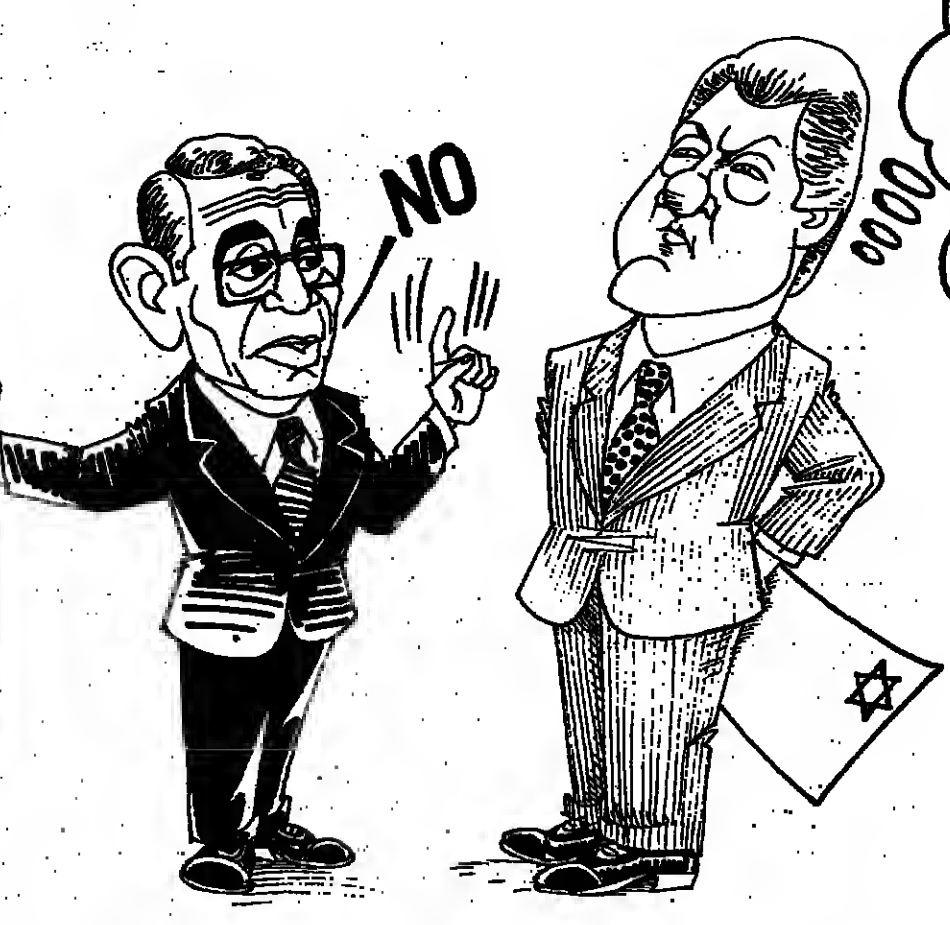
It is obvious that attempts to transcend the major differences that have appeared within Egyptian-American relations constitute a concrete obstacle. And it is equally obvious that some Jewish circles in the US, supportive of Netanyahu, are working at widening the rift.

Egyptian officials have tried to contain the effects of this campaign. Yet the US authorities appear incapable of comprehending Arab concerns, and are making no attempts at reassurance. The Scud missile affair, linked by American sources and the cause of much anger in Cairo, illustrates the dangers attached to Israeli campaigns.

The Middle East is passing through a critical phase. And the G7 summit communiqué, while it soothed some Arab fears, is hardly up to the task of engineering a resumption of the peace process.



Gomaa



## Soapbox

### An unequal battle

Boutros-Boutros Ghali's fight for nomination for a second term as secretary-general of the UN in the face of American opposition is an aspect of the struggle between the poor South and the world's sole superpower.

Politically speaking it is a far from equal battle, pitting Ghali, a veteran diplomat, against the US administration, which via the Security Council wields a veto on his reappointment.

Whatever Ghali's future prospects, now would seem an appropriate time to examine the record of his first term of office at the UN. Under his leadership the UN has performed a high profile role, both in rescue and peace keeping operations, and in organising international conferences.

Over the past few years the UN Secretary-General, through his actions, has confirmed his reputation as both a prudent diplomat and a courageous international official. His period as head of the UN has been distinguished by an independent and democratic attitude towards running the organisation. The problems he faces owe stem from the fact that, as an Egyptian, Arab and an African, he has never been inclined to accept, unquestioningly, the dictates of the world's only superpower.

Ghali's efforts, added to his predecessor's, constitute nothing less than an historical legacy, a foundation on which the UN might build in order to foster a better and more just international system.

Perhaps it is sufficient tribute to Boutros Ghali simply to state that he has tried so hard and so assiduously to pursue a line that was independent. He deserves our support, and when he returns, he deserves to be welcomed, indeed, the highest honours the Egyptian state can bestow.



This week's Soapbox speaker is a professor of political science at Helwan University and president of Al-Qarar Consulting Centre.

El-Sayed Eltiwa

# The multi-facets of peace

If the Arab Summit achieved one thing, it was to assert that peace is not relative, argues Gamil Matar

Some Arab political commentators have exhibited a tendency to minimise not only the substance but the extent of the changes that have taken place in the Israeli government. This attitude, shared by some foreign observers, is not without cause. Israel is, after all, a state founded on an ideological creed. It is a state in which both citizens and political parties adhere to an unwritten national charter. This charter differs from that of other nations in that it is restricted to the founding principles of the state, justifying the right of the state and its creed to exist. And since this charter does not extend to protecting and safeguarding a specific form of government we should not, it is argued, expect any significant transformation in the fundamental nature and conduct of the state simply because its government has changed.

Other commentators, however, have pinned their hopes on at least some change in the way Israel approaches the negotiating process, not least in the speed with which it is willing to implement specific points of agreement. These people have a right to believe that a major transformation did indeed occur in Israel when the reins of power shifted from Peres to Netanyahu.

It would be foolhardy to under-emphasise the distinction between these two perspectives. They are not a minor divergence of opinion; rather they represent two fundamentally different Arab visions of peace. And the achievement of the Arab summit held in Cairo can be measured by its success in transcending the conflict between these two visions and reconciling them in the paragraph of its final communiqué dealing with the principles of Arab-Israeli peace.

It is certainly no coincidence that this particular paragraph stirred the new Israeli government into complaining angrily that the Arabs have set preconditions for the peace process. The Netanyahu government was never likely to accept the content of this paragraph, since to do so would have been tantamount to agreeing to resume Arab-Israeli negotiations where they left off on the eve of Israel's bombardment of southern Lebanon. This would have been at odds with the impetus of Israel's recent election results, the direction of which appears to be an attempt to set the clock back to some earlier stage of the negotiations.

Israeli rejection of the principles forming what the Arabs term the basis for future negotiations should not, then, come as any surprise. And herein lies the rub: the paragraph in the final statement outlined non-

negotiable principles. Yet the Likud government is demanding they be renegotiated.

In the lead up to the summit the view was often voiced that the Arabs would prove incapable of realising any united stance towards the Israeli government's new negotiating line. Commentators predicted that Arab reactions would follow clearly demarcated lines. Those countries that had already obtained territorial concessions from previous agreements were not expected to resist Israel's tougher stance while other countries that have yet to regain territory, traditionally more hard-line, were expected to become even more obdurate. Those in the middle, having obtained only a fraction of the land and the recognition of a few, though by no means all of their rights, were expected to be cautious of appearing too radical. And then there is the fourth group, those Arab nations that are far from the heart of the conflict and who, according to some analysts, would be fearful of any show of toughness. It seems, furthermore, that Israel's rulers had based their predictions of the summit's results on such categorisations.

The Arab summit demonstrated the redundancy of such glib categorisations. Not all parties who had gained from previously concluded agreements and not all countries outside of the front-line corridor were exclusively moderate. Nor were those parties that have yet to obtain their due territorial rights particularly radical. Indeed, the moderate-radical divide upon which Israel had hedged its bets simply did not manifest itself. This does not mean that Israel had adopted a new and less pertinent analysis of the situation. Israel has always depended on its ability to deal with Arab parties separately, and consequently from a position of strength. And it has always banked on Arab states having divergent concepts of peace.

Israel has different ways of talking about peace with different Arab countries. Peace with Jordan is a strategic peace. No Israeli official could doubt the value of peace with Jordan. Israel cannot normalise relations with the rest of the Arab world if it does not first succeed in normalising its relations with Jordan. Only via Jordan does any Arab-Israeli defence coordination become at all viable. If Israel entertains hopes of entering — or aborting — any regional arrangements, it has to do so through Jordan. Jordan is Israel's gateway to the Arabs of the Tigris-Euphrates valley and to the Arabs of the Gulf, its mediator between two cultures and visions, and its trump card in gaining access in Arab petroleum wealth.

Many Israeli policy-makers are not too shy to admit that in Israel's view there can be no solution to the Palestinian problem unless Jordan is involved. Israel under Netanyahu, just as under Peres, holds the Palestinian National Authority responsible for guaranteeing that Israeli citizens remain safe from the violence, anger and misery of the Palestinian people. Jordan will be asked to guarantee that the PNA fulfils this task, and if necessary, itself assume the responsibility. At the Sharm El-Sheikh summit, Israel tried to convince the US to draw up a formula that would implicitly enjoin Jordan and Syria to act as guarantors against violence emanating from Palestine or Lebanon. That Syria did not attend the summit frustrated this effort. But at the last moment Israel got its guarantees via bilateral arrangements and agreements with the US. This is what gave Israel the green light to launch its massacre in southern Lebanon.

Israel's peace with Egypt is a "cold peace." I believe that both countries have come to accept this fact and are now basing their plans for future Egyptian-Israeli relations on this frigidity. In other words, it appears that both sides have reached a tacit agreement that recognises that there is no hope for any sudden-surge of warmth in the contractual "peace" that exists between them. One can understand the logic of both sides. The ruling elites in both countries have acquired the conviction that every new distortion in the balance of military power in the region — i.e. every new addition to Israel's military superiority — compounds the accumulated store of mistrust. Every new relationship that Israel establishes with other Arab or non-Arab countries in the region detracts from Egypt's regional status. Every proposal for new regional orders pushed so enthusiastically by the international community in order to diversify and broaden the basis for Israel's normalisation and in order to enhance its regional role comes at the expense of regional configurations in which Egypt plays a central role.

Against this backdrop some commentators have, however, revised their opinions to contend that the cold peace is not, in reality, as immutable or as slow to change as it appears. The logic that precludes the possibility of any thaw in relations in the foreseeable future, also informs the growing conviction that it is probably easier for this "peace" to degenerate into a "cold war" than to continue as it is; for any length of time. For over a

year exchanges between Israel and Egypt have suggested to many an ineffectual that is more characteristic of a state of cold war than of cold peace. Diplomatic and political relations between the two are reminiscent of those that existed between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Common borders are calm, but there are red lines that neither side dare cross and certain rules and tacit understandings that prevent the situation between them from deteriorating into open hostility.

Neither "strategic" nor "cold", peace with Syria is a "deferred" peace. Israel and Syria have yet to reach any agreements or new understandings with respect to their mutual relations or with regards to the region as a whole. There is no flow of goods, personnel or communications between the two countries that could remotely suggest any degree of normalisation. Yet, at the same time, they are jointly involved in the "peace process" and evince a commitment to reaching peace. Israel's early decision to defer negotiations with Syria had a certain logic, even if it resulted in a heavy death toll in the security belt in southern Lebanon. The aim was to deprive the Palestinians and the Jordanians of any opportunity to coordinate with Syria when they were negotiating with Israel. It also gave the US the occasion to intensify pressures on Syria and to keep Syria on its list of countries supporting terrorism. Ultimately Israel hoped that its delay tactics would ignite latent inter-Arab conflicts and first antagonisms between the Arab world and Iran and between the Arab world and Turkey. In other words, Israel's persistent refusal to entertain peace prospects with Syria affords it more time to assess how regional configurations of power might realign themselves.

Relations with Arab countries lying outside the cordon of front-line states, the countries of North Africa and of the Gulf, are treated by the Israeli media as a sort of folk-dance. Peace with these countries — from Israel's perspective — is no more than a picturesque detail. It does not involve the intricate complications of secret and overt negotiations, the shuffling back and forth between European and American capitals, the buffeting by internal or external pressures and the oiled demarcate security and military boundaries. As a result, Israel does not take these relationships seriously, but rather as a form of light entertainment to amuse Israeli policy-makers after a strenuous day of obstructing more fundamental progress in the peace negotiations.

This is how the Israelis — and some Arabs — perceive peace between Israel and the Arabs. It is a perception, however, that will remain deficient as long as neither the Israelis, Palestinians or the Arabs put forward an explicit conception for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. I do not predict that the Israelis will be very forthcoming in this regard. But here I would like to voice my difference with those who contend that Netanyahu's statements, before and since the Israeli elections, set new conditions for the remaining part of the negotiations and thus constitute new obstacles to the peace process. Netanyahu's repeated "no's" with regard to complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights, the partition of Jerusalem, the establishment of a Palestinian state and a halt to building new Israeli settlements, far from dismantling existing settlements have disarmed nothing new. Peres, before being voted out of office had adopted the same line. Not once had he suggested, unequivocally, that he would be willing to withdraw from the Golan Heights and restore them to Syrian sovereignty, or that Jerusalem could become a Palestinian capital, or that he would approve of the establishment of a fully sovereign and independent Palestinian state, or that he would call a halt to the expansion of Israeli settlements.

Over these points there is no fundamental difference between Netanyahu, and Peres. The only differences, perhaps, be in their respective styles and timing, their relative intransigence and their readiness to resort to violence. But in the end these are fine shades of difference, behind which lies that broad and significant common ground in which the views of the Likud and Labour parties over the future of Palestine merge.

Likud's vision is merely an extension of that of Yitzhak Rabin, who granted Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority certain rights and powers to enable them to suppress the Palestinian resistance against Israel, but not enough to suppress the Palestinian opposition and to prevent it from regaining its popularity and revitalising the spirit and values of the Palestinian revolution.

If peace with Jordan is strategic, with Egypt "cold peace" — cold war, with Syria "deferred" and with other Arab countries an amusing diversion, with Palestinians it is impossible.

The writer is the director of the Cairo-based Arab Centre for Development and Futuristic Research.

# Pragmatism no longer the order of the day

Separate agreements have had their day, argues Osama El-Ghazali Harb. What is needed now is a steadfast commitment to a comprehensive settlement

The most recent developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict lead to only one conclusion — that separate settlements concluded by Israel with individual Arab states are a thing of the past. It has now become apparent that nothing short of a comprehensive settlement between Israel and all the Arabs will be acceptable.

The origins of any settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict must perforce date back to Sadat's visit to Israel in November 1977. Since that visit took place, almost two decades ago, the question of partial versus comprehensive settlement has been the centre of controversy. Should Arab states enter into negotiations with Israel separately to settle their specific problems, or should Arab countries collectively enter negotiations with the aim of reaching a comprehensive settlement?

So-called nationalist or revolutionary Arab regimes have tended to favour a comprehensive approach to peace, bitterly criticising those Arab regimes which concluded partial settlements with Israel. Sadat is the bete noire of these regimes. Egypt, however, refused to cave in under the pressure of Arab rejectionism, and eventually recovered all its territory in return for peace. Fifteen years later, separate settlements were reached between Israel and the PLO (starting with the Oslo Accord), and between Israel and Jordan. These agreements were, in their turn, targeted by the advocates of a comprehensive settlement.

It is important, at this juncture, that we examine the underlying causes for the adoption of a partial versus a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Is the rationale behind the choice dependent on the intensity of nationalist sentiments, or is it a result of a profound awareness of the importance and value of Arab unity? Does the insistence on a comprehensive settlement reflect dedication on the part of certain Arab countries to the goals and ideals of Arab nationalism on one hand, and a willingness to enter into individual agreements reflect an antagonism towards such goals on the other?

Perhaps at this point one should state a self-evident truth: those countries that have concluded partial agreements with Israel did so because such agreements served some of their interests, i.e. they

did so for pragmatic reasons. Yet in concluding such agreements the countries concerned certainly hoped that their actions would pave the way for a comprehensive settlement.

Similarly, countries which have staunchly supported a comprehensive agreement have done so believing that their own interests can only be served through such an approach. Yet, while in essence their rationale was self-serving, they still reserved the right to raise emotional nationalist banners. The objective realities that justify disparate approaches to resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict must, then, be sought in specificities on a case by case basis.

In 1977 Sadat had no alternative but to seek to conclude a separate peace with Israel. He exhorted Arab leaders to join his initiative for peace but they lacked his broad vision and far-sightedness. Though abandoned by the rest, Sadat would not turn away from what he believed was the best course of action for Egypt. He wished to capitalise on the results of the October War when such memories were still vivid in the memory of Israel and the world.

Sadat was undoubtedly conscious that even acting singly Egypt could obtain what it wanted from Israel. Egypt is, after all, the largest Arab country. Its military capabilities, as evinced in the October War, posed a real threat to Israel. Nor could Sinai be considered, from the Israeli point of view, as being of the same strategic or political import as other Arab territories under Israeli occupation. Agreements on limiting the deployment of weapons in Sinai was enough to assuage Israeli fears and secure a withdrawal.

In the case of Jordan, King Hussein was able to conclude a separate peace with Israel which served Jordan's interests. The situation, though, was different to that prevailing at the time of the Egyptian peace treaty with Israel, not least because Jordan could never be considered as posing a military threat to its neighbour. Disputes over occupied territory were also, at the time of the Jordanian-Israeli agreement, at a low ebb.

The Palestinian agreement represents yet another scenario. A separate peace deal concluded with the Palestinians served, on some levels at least, as a recognition of a distinct Palestinian identity. It might be seen as a manifestation of the paradox in which

Palestinians find themselves. For while Palestinians need to underwrite their independence as a nation with an assertion of their own identity and right to self-determination, they have always supported movements for Arab unity. An ironic situation arises: the only nod in the direction of Arab unity condoned by the Israelis has been their desire to see Palestinian negotiators incorporated into the negotiating teams of other countries, a kind of back-handed refusal to acknowledge a distinct Palestinian identity. Yet in asserting their identity, the Palestinians have found it impolitic to comply with Israeli demands.

The current situation, though, begs one question: Is it now possible, as we approach the remaining stages of the peace process, to pursue separate settlements on the Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian fronts? All the signs in place appear to point to one conclusion: that separate agreements with Israel have now been subsumed by the desire to achieve a comprehensive peace.

From the very outset of the process President Al-Assad has known that Syria would not be able to conclude an honourable settlement with Israel on its own. The Golan Heights, symbolically and strategically, are of great importance to Israel, far greater than Sinai, while at the same time Syria, unlike Egypt, poses a less serious military threat to Israel. Syria, from the beginning, was in no position to compromise Arab support in the manner Sadat did.

The position of Lebanon is similar to that of Syria. Despite the heroism that has marked Lebanese resistance to Israeli occupation, Lebanon cannot confront Israel on its own. A comprehensive Arab settlement is a must for Lebanon, which has not only to secure its own territorial integrity but must also address the problem of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon. This presence is at the heart of the refugee question, one of the substantive issues on the agenda of a comprehensive settlement.

The settlement seems most complicated on the Palestinian front. While a separate settlement is required to underline the national identity of Palestinians, a comprehensive settlement is required if Palestinians demands for the establishment of a Palestinian state, the recovery of the Arab sector of Jerusalem and a stop to the

building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, are to receive any meaningful response.

Should Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority engage in separate negotiations, they will not achieve the results they desire outside the context of strong and clearly united Arab support. Such support cannot be engendered by, or incorporated in, the mandate of individual delegations. It can be realised only through regular regional — and international — consultations.

The recognition of this fact on the part of the Arab parties to peace is the most important achievement of the Cairo Arab Summit. It is a recognition that Israel's government has always feared, under both Peres and Netanyahu. Indeed, in its level-headed assessment of the problems to be faced in the next stage of negotiations, the summit could well serve as a model for Arab negotiators seeking a comprehensive settlement.

The summit, though, represents a first step on a long and winding road. By inviting Arab leaders to the meeting — after consultations with King Fahd and President Assad — President Mubarak was in fact inviting the Arab parties to initiate a new phase, fraught with risk and difficulty, for the achievement of a comprehensive and just peace. Under Sadat Egypt — forced to accept a separate peace — never abandoned wider Arab issues. Under Mubarak too, Egypt is steering a course towards a comprehensive peace, without forfeiting the achievements of previous separate settlements.

It is surely no coincidence that, just as Israeli fears are reaching new heights, the reins of power should have been handed over to the Likud. And in the face of the new realities heralded by the Cairo summit, one question poses itself. Will the Israeli prime minister persist in his obsolete demagoguery? Will he continue simply to shake his head and say no, no to the return of the Golan, no to the establishment of a Palestinian state, and no to the return of East Jerusalem?

The writer is the editor-in-chief of Al-Siyassa Al-Dawliya (International Politics) Journal.



Nehad Selaiha is bowled over by Yukio Ninagawa's Kabuki Medea

# Medea in drag

Until last week, and despite what all the theatre history books say, "Cleopatra performed by a male" had always seemed to me a preposterous proposition — one that required a fantastic leap of the imagination. I had felt sure that whatever "boy actor" undertook the part in Shakespeare's day must have mangled it, producing a pitiful travesty of the Egyptian queen. I had also resented the idea of males usurping the voices and identities of women and ousting them from the public performance arena in the name of theatrical conventions. As a reasonable human being and mild feminist, the exclusion of women from the theatre in whatever age or country, in ancient Greece, Elizabethan England or 17th century Japan (female performances were banned by the authorities in 1629), seemed to me not only outrageously unfair and deeply offensive, but also contrary to the spirit of theatre itself as carnival and a festive communal event.

On the few occasions I had the chance to watch a Kabuki performance, a form of theatre exclusive to male actors, such feelings had always coloured my reception. I still remember my vicious delight at the audience's baffled reaction to the classical Kabuki play presented at the official opening of the Opera House nearly eight years ago. It was a solemn occasion, attended by the president and his wife plus an exclusive audience. Nevertheless, after the 15 minutes of stunned silence, and despite the gorgeous, elaborate costumes and scenery, many were fighting desperately to keep a straight face while others sought relief in giggles and sniggers. The following morning a cartoon by Mustafa Hussein in *Al-Ikhar* showed a woman in a state of nervous collapse with her mother supporting her and explaining that her husband had jumped at her from under the stairs, doing a "Kabuki act". This signalled a flood of jokes about Kabuki.

On that occasion it was obvious that the Egyptian audience could not connect in any meaningful way, aesthetic

or otherwise, with the spectacle on offer. With no previous experience of this art form and very little knowledge as to what to expect, they had found the movements and the vocal delivery of the performers almost outlandish.

Last Saturday, however, at the Ninagawa Company's production of Euripides' *Medea*, it was a different story. At the same place, in the main hall of the Opera House where the earlier Kabuki performance had taken place, director Yukio Ninagawa showed us what a talented, imaginative artist could do with old forms and conventions. Many of the basic features of classical Kabuki were there: the carefully regulated and choreographed movements (known as *kata* or forms); the poses (*mie*) which accentuate the climactic moments of the action; the use of the traditional three-stringed musical instrument called *shamisen*, of wooden clappers to orchestrate the performance and highlight the climaxes and, above all, the use of *onnagata*, or male actors to female roles. But while preserving them, Ninagawa, like a real master, managed to break through with his own innovations.

What he achieved in his version of Euripides' *Medea* (a very shrewd and happy choice of text) was not simply a perfect fusion of Japanese traditional stylisation and Western modern realism or a bridging of the past and the present, as has been said, but also what one can only describe, in terms of its impact, as a kind of mystical union of maleness and femaleness in the figure of the great Tokusaburo Arashi as Medea.

From an obvious symbol of femaleness — traditionally conceived and visually rendered in terms of dress, gesture, movement and mask — we watched him transform himself, wizard-like, into a warm, vibrant human presence that transcends sexual difference and bodies forth in vivid details the warring passions of all humanity. In this respect, not only the acting — the intricate voice manipulation, the deeply compelling full-body techniques and

cording to the notes on the production printed in the pamphlet, Tsujimura adapted traditional Japanese costumes to a modern minimalist style, using a variety of kimono materials, and the capes were handmade from 50 pieces of embroidered antique silk sashes. But apart from their great beauty, which delighted the eye, the costumes, in harmony with the movement, were used in the case of the chorus to structure the performance space and build sequences of powerful, evocative stage images. In the case of *Medea* they had the added dramatic function of underscoring her growing despair and loneliness and her final rejection of the traditional stereotypes of the submissive female, the obedient wife, and the tender, self-sacrificing mother. Arashi appears first richly decked out in full feminine regalia. As the play progresses he begins to strip, taking off the heavy bejewelled hat first, then the wide, colourful cloak, and finally the intricately embroidered outer garment. He is left with a very simple, close-fitting long dress, the colour of blood and matching skull-fitting bonnet. At this moment, the whole body, freed from the constricting traditional trappings of femininity, becomes a stunningly eloquent medium of expression, shedding its earlier stylised patterns of movement and gesture, and growing freer and more passionate.

Curiously, it was the sight of this thin, gaunt, male body, tensed up in rage, pitifully cowering in agony or dashing around blindly, like a wild, caged bird, that brought home to me, for the first time in performance, the full weight of *Medea's* tragedy as woman and human being. It reminded me that great acting, whatever the sex of the performer, could transcend all limitation, including those of sexual identity. I walked away from the show thinking that given a director of Ninagawa's imaginative power and an actor of Arashi's emotional range and technical versatility, *Cleopatra* played by a male was not after all such a ludicrous idea. But then, why not a female Antony, or Lear, or Hamlet?

the carefully injected doses of psychological realism — but also Jusaburo Tsujimura's costumes played a crucial role. They were naturally, as one expects all costumes in Nob and Kabuki performances, rich and sumptuous in colour and material, delicately embroidered and exquisitely designed. Ac-



Tokusaburo Arashi as Medea

## Music

Cairo Symphony Orchestra: Talents 4; Bizet: *The Arlesienne suite* no. 2, *Farandole*; Mozart: *Concerto* no. 20 in D minor for piano and orchestra, K466, Ghada Shaker (piano) and *Concerto* in B flat major for bassoon and orchestra, K191, Tamer Kamal El-Din (bassoon); Mendelssohn: *Symphony* no. 4 in A major, op. 90 (Italian); Kamal Hilal, conductor; Small Hall, Cairo Opera House; 30 June

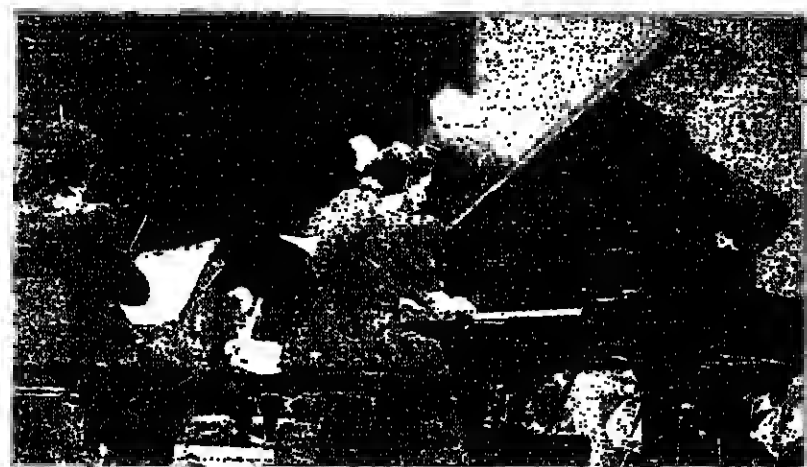
Watch the crochets fly and swing, hear the quavers quiver. There were notes, notes, notes everywhere at this concert in the Small Hall. Notes and a certain pulse of rhythms. But no beat, beat, beat of the tomtoms to add that so needed piquant sauce of excitement and allure.

The two soloists, pianist Ghada Shaker and bassoonist Tamer Kamal El-Din were fine. The Cairo Symphony Orchestra were there — partly in person, partly in absentia. Strange anomaly. Good evening, said they. Then, rather in embarrassment: far what exactly?

To commence, Bizet, whose piece *Farandole* from *L'Arlesienne suite* opened the concert. This was quite straight, rather hard sounding, with plenty of brassy noise. That's the way of this dance. But as the concert wore on, it once again became obvious that the Small Hall is the villain, causing problems for any concert given within its over-reverberative walls. No large forces; small string orchestras suit it best.

Even the piano has a rough deal if it opens out fully, as pianos are wont to do in their grand expansive moods. Chamber music comes off best. They do not burst the sound barriers, but an orchestra of some size puts the hall into an angry fit of protest and it whams the sound back from the walls with a harsh exuberant double-fuzz to anything

## Open wide the windows



Ghada Shaker

above a mezza-forte. So proceeded the concert. Some conductors can bring some sweetness into the limited overcharged space, but Kamal Hilal did not have the trick. He angered the place and got in return only an approximation of a good classical tone — which was what was needed for this concert. Better keep to the middle of the road — don't fly off into the bushes and scrub-land at the sides.

First came the Mozart piano concerto in D minor, K466 with Ghada Shaker in control. This is Mozart in *Don Giovanni* mood. It's a grand big thing in all of the three sections. Powerful, sometimes dark, seldom with his gift for love and affection. The melodies for piano are really for the piano — instrumental, percussive, jabbing and thrusting, darkly forbidding. Nothing singing or easy. The pianist knew all about this. She was direct, no nonsense, no trace of dear Amadeus to charm us, but forceful, statuesque, with the correct flair of cynical bravado.

At the opening Shaker drove

straight in. This is a star piece — sharply, deep shadows, just a few very tall, well-dressed fiends. The piano made the tunes painfully clear cut. The archestra, suffering from Small Hall laryngitis, was dumpty, but picked up in the next movement, the Romance. There is not much romance in the notes. There was none in the piano playing. She was honest, no passion — anger instead. Ghada Shaker's technique is fully equal to the demands of the D minor. She could even make an insolent attack on the phrase endings which culminate mostly in an angry trill. All these she did, timely, on the beat and exciting. In control, on top, and never wavering. It was very good to hear. There are spots in the romance where the music droops and slides which might have had greater nuance, but this player went for direct force and carry on. It was a cool romance to say the least.

In the last section Shaker showed real distinction of schooling. No soliciting the listener. The off-hand stabbing

David Blake takes in the fresh air with Mozart and Mendelssohn

uses it like a voice. With no trouble he floats the sound far up and out of the noisy Small Hall into a place of contemplation where this long neglected, eccentric instrument enjoys its own poetry.

And so to Italy with Mendelssohn's no. 4 in A major. The colour is zircon blue. It blows along in the opening: fresh sea breezes, the siren South of Dryden and Goethe. The latter went over the Alps and far away — blue taffeta skies and Tintoretto colours: speed, rhythm, youth and no regrets. Is there anyone who has ever been really, totally happy? Mendelssohn seems to have been, and he paid the price for it. All angels pay the price for their own dazzle. They put out like errant stars. Everyone loved this wonder. He had everything of value in addition to his millions. But they were part of his skin, and he with total Olympian indifference never had to look down so far as to see the hand that wrote the cheque. The gods loved him so well they took him before the smallest fleck of earthly aridness ever touched him.

The music catches the breath. This performance of the Italian symphony did not. Let's continue to blame the Small Hall. From opening to end the poor strings doing their best were totally drowned by the brass, winds and basses. Everything blew over the top of the strings so there was not much sea wind to flutter and soar during an opening which must set the picture of the Grand Tour.

There were strange digestive rumbles in the orchestra foreign to Mendelssohn. They continued until the end. No colour blue and no rippling seascapes. But at the end, in the last movement, the horns finally righted themselves with no frayed edges and gave the cry: I love Italy, everyone loves Italy and everyone loves Mendelssohn.

## Listings

### EXHIBITIONS

Barbara Graf & Sadiyo Niederberger  
Maskrabiya Gallery, 8 Cham-pollion St, Downtown. Tel 578 4494. Daily exc Fri, 11am-8pm. Until 4 July.  
Exhibition under the title "The Travel Kit".

Gabri Abdel-Hay, Emsa Shabla & Mohamed Ismail  
Foundation for Hellenic Culture, 18 Sidi Mervalli St, near El-Azhar, Alexandria. Tel 482 1598. Until 4 July.  
Photographic exhibition under the title "Alexandria 3x3".

Jihan Raouf, Sameh El-Babany & Lohna Zakaria  
Khan El-Maghraby Gallery, 18 El-Mansour Mohamed St, Zamalek. Tel 340 3349. Daily exc Sun, 10.30am-3pm & 6pm-9pm. Until 6 July.  
Exhibition under the collective title "Fantasy" are the paintings of the three artists.

Pottery Exhibition  
Gallery Noun, 4 Mahmoud Abdul Ouan St, off Hegaz St, El-Mahkama, Heliopolis. Tel 248 0082. Daily 11am-11pm. Until 7 July.  
Artisans from all over Egypt exhibit their pottery work.

Georges Seif (Paintings)  
Gallery Salama, 36/A Ahmed Orabi St, Mahadessin. Tel 346 3342. Daily exc Fri, 10am-2.30pm & 3.30pm-9.30pm. Until 23 July.

Mohamed Shaker (Paintings) & Tarek Zabady (Sculptures)  
Esra Gallery, 3 El-Nassim St, Zamalek. Tel 340 6283. Daily exc Sun, 10.30am-2pm & 3pm-8pm. 9-27 July.

Group Show (Paintings & Sculptures)  
Esra Gallery, 1 El-Sherifein St, Downtown. Tel 393 1699. Daily exc Fri & Sat, 9am-1pm. Until 5 August.

The Museum of Mr and Mrs Mohamed Mahmoud Khalil  
1 Kafour El-Akhdid St, Dokki. Tel 332 2376. Daily exc Mon, 10am-6pm.  
Egypt's largest collection of nineteenth century European art, amassed by the late Mahmoud Khalil, including works by Courbet, Van Gogh, Gauguin, Manet and Rodin.

Egyptian Museum  
Tahrir St, Downtown. Tel 373 4319.

Islamic Museum  
Part Said St, Ahmed Maher St, Bab El-Khalq. Tel 390 9930/390 1520. Daily exc Fri, 9am-4pm; Fri 9am-11.30am & 3pm-6pm.  
A vast collection of Islamic arts and crafts including *mashrabiya*, lusteware ceramics, textiles, woodwork and coins, drawn from Egypt's Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mameluke periods and other countries in the Islamic world.

Coptic Museum  
Mar Girgis, Old Cairo. Tel 362 8766. Daily exc Fri, 9am-4pm; Fri 9am-11am & 1pm-3pm.  
Founded in 1910, the museum houses the largest collection of Coptic art and artefacts in the world.

Islamic Museum  
Part Said St, Ahmed Maher St, Bab El-Khalq. Tel 390 9930/390 1520. Daily exc Fri, 9am-4pm; Fri 9am-11.30am & 3pm-6pm.

Museum of Modern Egyptian Art  
Opera House Grounds, Gezira. Tel 340 6841. Daily exc Mon, 10am-1pm & 3pm-9pm.  
A permanent display of paintings and sculpture charting the modern art movement in Egypt from its earliest pioneers to latest practitioners.

Mohamed Nagui Museum  
Chateau Pyramide, 9 Mahmoud Al-Gundi St, Giza.  
A museum devoted to the paintings of Mohamed Nagui (1888-1956).

Mahmoud Mukhtar Museum  
Tahrir St, Gezira. Daily exc Sun and Mon, 9am-1.30pm.  
A permanent collection of works by the sculptor Mahmud Mukhtar (d. 1934), whose granite monument to Saad Zaghloul stands near Qasr El-Nil Bridge.

FILMS  
River of Fireflies  
Japanese Cultural Centre, 106

Qasr El-Nil St, Garden City. 4 July. 6pm.  
Directed by Eiso Sagawa (1987). The film captures the first love of a 14-year-old boy. The beautiful scenery of the four seasons provides a wonderful background for the spectacular scene of one million fireflies.

Commercial cinemas change their programmes every Monday. The information provided is valid through to Sunday of the week in which it is wise to check with the cinemas.

Mit Fall  
Rivoli II, 26th July St, Downtown. Tel 575 5053. Daily 1pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 8pm & 10pm. Diana Palace, 17 El-Ahly St, El-Madinet, Downtown. Tel 924 727. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Tiba II, Nasr City. Tel 262 9407. Daily 10.30am, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.

Ya Donia... Ya Gharami (Life... My Passion)  
Rivoli I, 26 July St, Downtown. Tel 575 5053. Daily 1pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm. Romy, Romy Sq, Heliopolis. Tel 258 0344. Daily 10am, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Tiba I, Nasr City. Tel 262 9407. Daily 10.30am, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.

Magdi Ahmed Ali's debut film explores the intimate lives of three women played by Leila Elwi, Elham Shabane and Hala Sedqi.

Esharet Merour (Traffic Light)  
Miaad, 38 Talaat Harb St.

Heat  
Ramsis Hilton I, Corniche El-Nil St. Tel 574 7436. Daily 10.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm. El-Horreyra II, El-Horreyra Mall, Roxy, Heliopolis. Daily 1pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm & midnight.  
Robert De Niro, a highly professional gangster, and Al Pacino, the cop in charge of arresting him, meet face to face in a powerful confrontation during which their talents reach their peak. Directed by Michael Mann.

Copy Cat  
Cairo Sheraton, El-Galaa St, Giza. Tel 360 0881. Daily 10.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 9.30pm & midnight. 35 Abdel-Hamid Badawi St, Heliopolis. Tel 293 1072. Daily 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.

Dead Man Walking  
Ramsis Hilton II, Corniche El-Nil St. Tel 574 7436. Daily 10.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.  
Starring Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn in an Oscar award-winning film.

The Quest  
Cosmos II, 12 Emadaddin St, Downtown. Tel 779 537. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.

Broken Arrow  
Karam II, 15 Emadaddin St, Downtown. Tel 924 830. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.

Sudden Death  
Metro 33 Talaat Harb St, Downtown. Tel 393 3897. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.

Drop Zena  
Ramsis Hilton, Corniche El-Nil St. Tel 574 7436. Daily midnight.

Man Without a Face  
Tahrir, 112 Tahrir St, Dokki. Tel 335 5726. Thur & Sat, midnight.

Braveheart  
Narmandy, 31 El-Ahram St, Heliopolis. Tel 258 0254. Daily, 8pm.

DANCE  
La Scala De Barcelon  
Cairo International Conference Centre, Nasr City. Tel 263 4631/2. Until 4 July, 8.30pm & 11.30pm.

THEATRE

El-Amir, Tapazzar (The Princess Awais)  
Zaki Talaat Hall, El-Tall'a Theatre, Ataba. Tel 937 948. Daily exc Tues, 9.30pm.

El-Set Hoda (Lady Hoda)  
National Theatre, Ataba Sq. Tel 911 267. Daily exc Wed, 9.30pm.

El-Kharta Fi Wara (The Map Is In Crisis)  
National Theatre, as above. Thur-Sat, 9pm.

El-Zaim (The Leader)  
El-Haram Theatre, Pyramids Road, Giza. Tel 386 3952. Daily exc Tues, 9.30pm.

Dastoor Ya Sladma (With Your Permission, Masters)  
El-Ponn Theatre, Ramses St. Tel 578 2444. Daily 10pm, Sat 8.30pm.

Norhan Wal Amir Morgan (Norhan and The Prince Morgan)  
Puppet Theatre, Ataba Sq. Tel 591 0954. Daily d.30pm.

Mama America  
Qasr El-Nil Theatre, Qasr El-Nil St. Tel 575 0761. Daily 10pm, Mon 8pm.  
Scripted by Mahdi Youssef, starring and directed by, Mohamed Sabhi.

Bahloni El Istambul (Bahloni in Istanbul)  
Ramsis Hilton Theatre, El-Galaa St. Tel 574 7435. Daily exc Mon, 10pm.

All information correct at time of going to press. However, it remains wise to check with venues first, since programmes, dates and times are subject to change at very short notice.

Please telephone or send information to Listings, Al-Ahram Weekly, Galaa St, Cairo. Tel 578d064. Fax 5786089/833.

Compiled by Inji El-Kashef

## Around the galleries



Sameh El-Banany

CERAMIC works by young Egyptian and foreign artists are exhibited at both the Museum of Modern Egyptian Art and Akheateu Gallery.

The Egyptian Centre for International Cultural Cooperation hosts paintings by Salah Zaki, notable for the articulation of pictorial space by a subtle blending of colours.

Khan El-Maghraby shows new work by Sameh El-Banany, Djehane Raouf and Lobna Zakariya. All three take one of the traditional subjects of still life — the flower painting — and update it in radical and exciting ways.

The Opera House gallery is given over to expressive faces, melancholic and piercing, by Fakhri Osman. Also at the Opera House is an exhibition by Magid Abdel-Razik, entitled "Contemplations", featuring depictions of traditional weddings.

Reviewed by Nagwa El-Ashri







# The mountain that roars

Evidence of continuing rock falls in Muqattam may be a prelude to something bigger, reports Mariz Tadros

"Every time I hear the rocks rumbling at night, I grab the children and run to our nearest relative's home. The rocks are so loud that you feel they must be tumbling close to your home. We can't risk it, we run away immediately before we are killed," said Sa'edya, an elderly woman who lives with her family at the foot of a mountain of rocks in Manshiet Nasser, more commonly known as Hay El-Zabbalin, or the garbage collectors' quarter. Sa'edya, like many of the inhabitants of this neighbourhood, lives with the legacy of the catastrophic collapse of a 400-ton chunk of rock that cost the lives of 69 people and injured 10 others in December 1993.

Residents whose homes are close to the mountains fear that this may not just have been an isolated incident. Even though authorities have hired companies to dynamite surrounding rocks to avoid any more landslides, the sounds of roaring rocks still keep residents awake at night.

The situation has now reached an impasse: residents dread the rocks and yet they fear abandoning their homes even more. Ateyat, the wife of one of the neighbourhood's garbage collectors and mother of six, is determined not to seek lodging elsewhere even though her home was one of the first to have tumbled down in 1993. Ateyat continues to pay the LE150 mortgage on her destroyed home although she is no longer able to live in what remains of it.

"The local authorities asked me to evacuate my home and made me sign agreeing to it... I have been living on the streets with my family — we are eight people living under these rocks... and there is nothing I can do. We can't leave, this is where my husband makes a living," said Ateyat. She would rather live in her haphazardly built home on top of a pile of rocks in spite of the danger it entails.

Head of Manshiet Nasser, General Sabri El-Komy, refused to comment on the continuing threat of rocks falling on the neighbourhood and insisted that there are many developments taking place in the area to lessen the risk, such as the introduction of new sewerage facilities in the area's schools.

Housing expert, Dr. Milad Hanna said that the Muqattam is considered to be of relatively recent geological age. "In between the clay, there are minute granules which bind the rocks together; the extent of their cohesion can be quite deceptive to many. This cohesion is weakened and destroyed when it comes into contact with water," he explained.

Hanna pointed out that a tried, guaranteed not to leak sewerage system must replace the haphazardly built ones to ensure the rocks are not affected in a way that harms the Muqattam's structure. He also added that the burning of garbage at the site causes chemical changes in the limestone layer of the rocks, and transforms it into calcium carbonate. "The mountain must be left free of any more housing construction otherwise its balance will be lost," he said. Practically, it means no more construction "beside it or underneath it so that it does not collapse like it did in the 1993 catastrophe".

Professor Maged El-Rekaiby, head of the Geological Department of the National Institute for Remote Sensing, said that if the current situation in the informally built areas does not change, the danger of catastrophes taking place will increase. El-Rekaiby

stressed that the primary reason behind the deteriorating conditions of the Muqattam mountains is water.

"Water leaking from informally built sewage systems and water used for irrigation, both soak through the lower layers of the rocks causing them to crumble and fall," he explained. The fact that in many regions of the mountain, people continue to use the primitive draining ditches for the disposal of their sewage is detrimental to the area. According to El-Rekaiby, "the pace at which informal settlements are being set up is much faster than the rate at which the government is coping with the introduction of sewage facilities for these areas".

But El-Rekaiby insists that "it is not entirely the government's fault since the dangers of building on the Muqattam haphazardly have been publicly announced. Yet nobody listens. People go on building anyway, with no permits and in areas which are not serviced by the sewage network. On all sides of the mountain, we see new villas and new make-shift homes built everyday."

El-Rekaiby asserted that this does not mean that the mountain is uninhabitable. But, those who want to live on the Muqattam should avoid building close to the edge where the pressure on the rocks is immense, he advised, and they should also not dispose of their sewage carelessly — a factor which adds to rock breakdown.

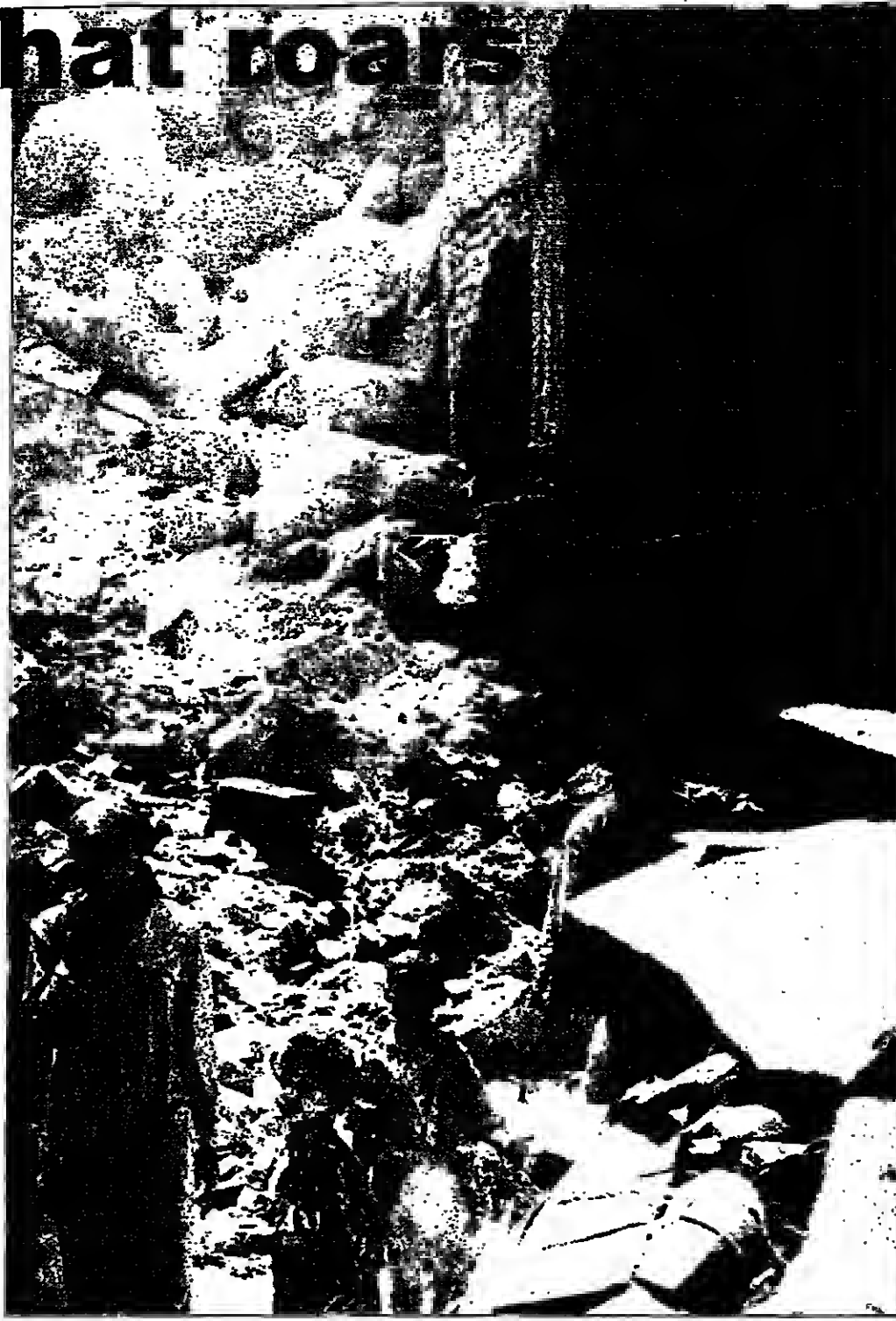
The edges of the mountain on the upper, middle and lower plateaus, from all directions are in danger of collapsing, said El-Rekaiby. "In maybe five or six years time, rocks which are 50 metres away from the edge of a plateau will have broken off and collapsed."

As the situation stands now, the controlling factors against rock fall are few and the size of the rocks falling has become larger which means that today, more than ever before in the history of the mountain, they are likely to fall in huge segments on people.

El-Rekaiby stressed that the evacuation of the area is unrealistic and therefore the one solution is to introduce a proper sewage system not for one community but for all the communities living on the Muqattam if they want to save the mountain from breaking down. The situation is becoming desperate with the emergence of caves inside the mountain which threaten the upper layer of the rocks, upon which houses are built.

Rafiq Zaki Guirgis, a geologist at the Institute for the Geological Survey of Egypt has been recording the changes in the mountain texture for the last few years. He warns that the risks of breakdown are highest now because there is increased pressure on the middle 12-metre limestone layer which in turn puts stress on the bottom layer. "This displaces rocks and when you have a series of rocks all leaning over, rubbing onto each other, more rocks are bound to fall. According to our recordings, the cracks in the rocks and the gaps between them have increased drastically since last year," he explained.

Guirgis asserted that the upper plateau is also in serious danger of collapsing and bringing down the expensive villas built on it. Since 1986, the institute's recordings show that 40 metres of the plateau have fallen, with most of the rocks falling onto the middle plateau. People competing to build their homes on the edges of the south cliff of the upper plateau have re-



photos: Mariz Tadros

cently been deterred by the cracks moving inwards and have abandoned their homes, added Guirgis.

Guirgis stressed that the urgent need for proper sewerage would alleviate, but not solve the problem, since the rocks will take at least a year to dry up "and that is after special pumps are brought in to suck out all the water that has soaked into the rocks."

Dr. Ramsis Nashed, head of the Seismology Division of the National Institute of Astronomical and Geophysical Sciences, warned that the toll of water leakage and dynamite explosions has reached dangerous proportions. Nashed said that a meeting last week with Dr. Venise Kamal Gouda, minister of scientific research, and other concerned parties addressed the effect of quarrying on the rocks and ways of limiting dynamite explosions which "could lead to the downfall of the mountain if they are not brought under control".

Nashed conceded that "30 per cent of the quarries have exceeded the point of danger in the Muqattam. We are not asking companies to stop, we are just asking them to limit or control the number of explosions spreading them over a longer period of time. This would not affect their profit margin." He stressed that 2.5 tons a day is the maximum capacity for the Muqattam rocks.

However, Nashed called for an immediate halt to haphazard quarrying. "I have reported it to the authorities but they told me that they know nothing about it although I am sure that these operations do take place during the night because people in the neighbourhood have complained about the noise," said Nashed. He added that the rocks that collapse everyday in New Maadi, 15 May City and in the Muqattam area, are from the effects of quarrying.

## What to do about desserts?

Too many kilos but a definite weakness towards sweet fatty foods? Mona El-Tawil explains how to have your cake and eat it too

Who can resist a creamy rich chocolate cake served with a generous helping of fresh whipped cream? Or a mile high strawberry pie with melt-in-your-mouth vanilla ice cream? What about the aroma of cinnamon wafting from the kitchen, promising a chewy coffee cake studded with nuts and raisins?

Desserts... the simple pleasures of life to those of us who firmly believe that no meal can be complete without them. I remember my father always saying that there is an empty spot in the stomach that can not be filled except by dessert, and so from early childhood we developed the sweet tooth and the taste for food that is sugary, buttery and oh so delicious!

My fondest memories of childhood evolve around helping my mother prepare some really wonderful treat. She was famous for her Swiss roll filled with jam and whipped cream, and her peach tarts and meringue pies. But what I remember most are the preparations we used to make every year to get ready for our annual summer holiday in Maamoura.

Getting ready for summer meant baking trays and trays of crisp, ring-like carrot cookies. We would roll out the dough and shape it into rings that were all exactly the same size and line them up one next

to the other, in huge trays that we baked outside at the local baker. Mind you, if one of these cookies was out of line or not exactly the same size as the rest the whole tray had to be redone! Yet we did not complain, even though we made enough to last us and our friends for three months!

### Applesauce squares

1 1/2 cups applesauce  
3 cups flour  
2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup water  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
6 egg whites  
1/2 cup raisins

Preheat oven to 350. Very lightly butter an 11x11 inch pan. Mix all ingredients except raisins with mixer at high speed for 3 minutes. Pour in pan. Sprinkle with raisins. Bake 30-35 minutes. Cut while warm and serve.

### Carrot cake with prune puree

4 cups grated carrot  
2 cups sugar  
1 cup crushed pineapple  
1 cup prune puree  
4 egg whites  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
2 cups flour  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
2 teaspoons cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
3/4 cup shredded coconut  
Preheat oven to 375. Very lightly butter 9x13 inch pan. Combine everything except coconut and mix well. Gently stir in coconut. Pour in pan and bake 45 minutes. Cool in pan and then cut and serve.

cause one of the main points about eating healthy is to reduce the amount of fat in your diet. However, breakthrough research done recently has shown that certain fruit purees can substitute for fat in desserts, and that they will give almost the same moistness and texture in a cake. Specifically, applesauce or prune puree have been shown to duplicate the effect of butter or oil in many cake recipes, and what you do is substitute the same amount of fat in a recipe with applesauce or prune puree. If you want to cut out the fat completely from a cake recipe, you can also substitute two egg whites for one whole egg (as all the fat and cholesterol is in the yolk), and you can use skimmed milk instead of whole milk.

To make applesauce: Peel and chop 6 apples. Just cover with water and cook over medium heat till apples are soft, and then puree. Makes about 3 cups applesauce.

To make prune puree: Combine 1 1/2 cups pitted prunes and 6 tablespoons water in food processor. Pulse until prunes are finely chopped. Makes one cup.

I will share two favourite recipes for you to try out, and I hope this will encourage you to experiment with your favourite recipes.

### Sufra Dayma

#### Kobeba balls

Ingredients:  
1/2 kilo minced meat (lean)  
1/4 kilo minced meat (cooked)  
1/4 kilo pine nuts (fried)  
2 1/2 cups crushed white wheat (borghol)  
1/2 cup semolina flour  
One onion (grated)  
Salt + pepper + allspice + cinnamon

Method:  
Cook the minced meat the usual way, then add the fried pine nuts, stir them in, season adding some allspice and cinnamon. Cover and remove from heat. Leave aside to cool off to use as the filling for the Kobeba balls. Mix the lean meat, the onion, the borghol, after thoroughly washing it under running water, the spices, and blend well in an electric meat blender or chopper. You will get a soft blend of Kobeba which you should hand blend well with 5 tablespoons of very cold water. Keep your hands moist with tap water, then take some of the blend and form a ball with the size of a large egg. With the thumb of your other hand, push forth the blend to make a hole, turning the Kobeba while pressing with your thumb towards the end, stopping before you pierce through the other end. Fill the hole with the filling set aside, then close the open end by bringing the blend together with your fingertips. After you finish all the quantity, preheat the oil until hot, then gently place the balls in the oil deep frying them. Turn them over when one side is done to fry the whole balls, then remove into kitchen blotting paper. Serve with yoghurt and mint salad.

Moushira Abdel-Malek

### Restaurant review

#### The dish undressed

Nigel Ryan on the virtues of simplicity

People are often a little snooty about kebabs restaurants. Quite why is anybody's guess, though I suspect that the majority of those who eat out regularly view such establishments as being a trifle unsophisticated. Such a view is really quite unfair since if the meat is good there is absolutely no reason not to just grill it over charcoal. Yet people appear to have an inordinate desire to drench bits of meat in sauce, feeling that if they are paying good money for a meal it might as well be dressed to the nines.

Haty El-Faramawy, on Maarouf Street, between Champollion and Talat Harb, has no time for such pretensions. It is a large, airy restaurant, with a few tables downstairs set in front of a large tiled picture of a goat, looking alarmingly like Landseer's Monarch of the Glen, and with a much bigger dining room upstairs. It is spotlessly clean, and judging from the afternoon visit I made, very popular. Families crowd the tables, elderly gentlemen eat alone. The menu is simple, offering salads, kebabs, kofta and cutlets. All the meat is cooked over charcoal, and is ordered by weight. It is certainly no place for vegetarians, though for the carnivore it may well be second heaven.

Perhaps, at the height of summer, the fact that the restaurant is not air-conditioned is something of a drawback. But there are fans, and certainly on the very hot day I visited it was perfectly comfortable. The windows are shaded by trees, though they still command a view of the street. It is far from unpleasant to simply sit and watch the world go by. Not that you will be sitting for long. Service is quick, efficient and courteous.

We ordered a quarter of a kilo each of kebab, kofta and cutlets. First, though, arrived bread, together with a selection of salads. These included cucumbers, lightly pickled with a little dill, tchima that also, I suspect, included peanut butter, not my favourite combination but one that appears to be gaining in popularity — you encounter it practically everywhere these days — and a mixed salad, heavy on tomatoes and dill. The ingredients were fresh, and if not hugely imaginative were perfectly fine.

Then arrived the plates of charcoal-cooked meat, balanced atop mountains of parsley. Haty El-Faramawy is not the kind of place to burn your meat into a cinder. It was cooked, though not overcooked, and of very good quality. This place obviously has a butcher who can be trusted, a far cry from common pheonomena. The cutlets, though a little blackened on the outside, had not dried out. The kebab was excellent. Both were lamb. The kofta was perhaps the least successful part of the meal, though to complain is really to quibble. Minced, not too highly seasoned, it was adequate. Disappointment focused, I think, on the fact that around the corner is an establishment that makes the finest kofta in town. Such proximity, though, should not deter anyone from visiting Haty El-Faramawy. The food is good, the staff unobtrusive and efficient, and the price, which included soft drinks and less than LE40 for two, though the quantities could well have been three — far from exorbitant. If you can bear to see what lies beneath the sauce, pay a visit.

Haty El-Faramawy, Maarouf Street, Downtown. Tel: 574 8750

### Al-Ahram Weekly

#### Crossword

By Samia Abdennour

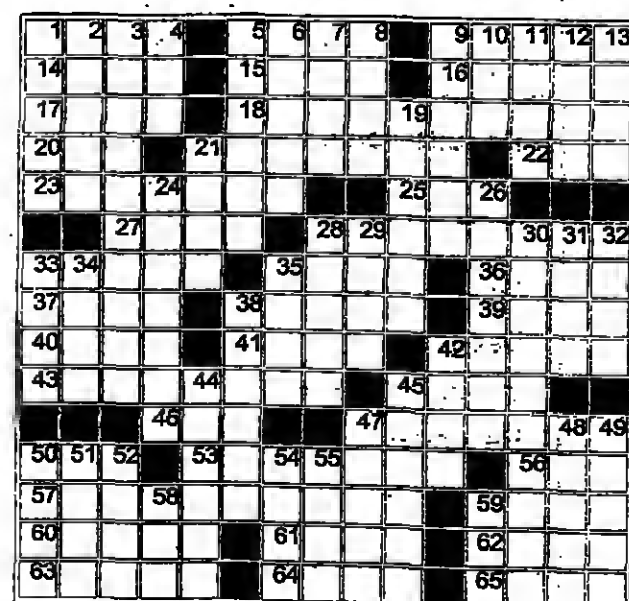
#### ACROSS

1. Existence (4)
5. Vending (9)
9. Lethal (5)
14. Small wild ox of Celebes (4)
15. Charles Lamb (4)
16. Growing out (5)
17. Vehicle (4)
18. Mass (10)
20. Weather directions (3)
21. Marked out; drafted (7)
22. Certain records, abb. (3)
23. Lose heart (6)
25. Crayes, Haiti (3)
27. Embrace; fix (4)
28. Frightener; alarm (8)
33. Balance; extort (5)
35. Foot wear (4)
36. Move hither and thither (4)

37. Beloved of Zeus, disguised as swan (4)  
38. Rapt (5)  
39. Frosts (4)  
40. Perfume (4)  
41. On the shelter side (8)  
42. Frolic (5)  
43. Fluster; dumbfound (8)  
45. Look to be (4)  
46. Sward (3)  
47. Plate glasses (7)  
50. Viper (3)  
53. Manifest; unabashed (7)  
56. Anatomical extremity (10)  
57. Contemplate; speculate (10)  
59. Citrus fruit (4)  
60. Came up (5)  
61. Learned (4)  
62. Profess (4)  
63. Matched up (5)  
64. Dynamic (4)  
65. Encloses (4)

#### DOWN

1. Tied (5)
2. Absurd (5)
3. Presage (10)
4. Chew (3)
5. Beta (6)
6. Audibly (5)
7. Long slender sea-fish (4)
8. Per (4)



9. Tributary (6)
10. Pismire (3)
11. Buttocks (4)
12. Above (4)
13. It disperses or concentrates light rays (4)
19. Tell; communicate (6)
21. Portrayal (4)
24. The North Star (7)
26. Streaked (7)
29. Rent (4)
30. Engine (10)
31. Always (4)
32. Relax (4)
33. Boor (4)
34. Relinquish (4)
35. Bundle (4)
38. Equestrian's need (6)
42. Mailed (4)
44. Flung (6)
45. Wiry (6)
47. Dampen (5)
48. Some mortals (5)
49. Presagers (5)
50. Father of Abel (4)
51. Wheys (4)
52. Machination; site (4)
54. Biblical sea vehicle, pl. (4)
55. Pant, jumbled (4)
58. Suffix forming nouns (3)
59. Wash against (3)



## President Hosni Mubarak's address to the 35th IAA World Congress

Ladies and gentlemen, Members of the 35th IAA World Congress,

It gives me pleasure to take this opportunity to welcome you to this evening's festivities and to invite you to become acquainted with the 36th IAA World Congress, which will be held in Cairo in May 1998.

I am certain that when you come to Cairo to share in the work of your next congress, you will be given the opportunity to become closely acquainted with Egypt, the people and the country.

You are sure to enjoy visiting its unique antiquities, which are a witness to 7000 years of ancient civilization, and learning of its modern renaissance, making your last congress of the century a fruitful experience.

'Interaction' is the theme of the Cairo congress and the choice of the theme, and venue cannot be more fitting. The Egyptian civilization is synonymous with communication and interaction between people, cultures and religions. Egypt's history, which is unique, is evidence



Members of the congress standing for the Korean and Egyptian national anthems

enough that this interaction is not only possible but is also desirable and full of riches.

The revolution in communications has made our world a small global village, just as the media in Egypt in all their forms, have been able to cover a great deal of ground in keeping pace with this revolution to find for them-

selves a fitting place on the International map of information.

Information's creative scope can greatly contribute towards building bridges and consolidating understanding between cultures and civilizations, contributing towards peace, security and economic welfare in every part of the world.

I therefore invite you to contribute your constructive efforts, in order to continue your noble goals. In bidding you farewell, I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the success of your 35th IAA World Congress and look forward to welcoming you to Cairo in May 1998.

Have a good evening!

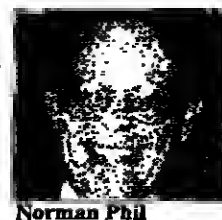
## Executive manager of IAA New York: A most impressive speech from Mubarak

MEMBERS of the IAA worldwide gave enthusiastic responses after the success of the Egyptian Night held at the conclusion of the 35th IAA Congress in Seoul. Although these responses and reactions will be published in a complete report next week, here is a look at what some had to say:

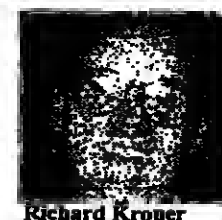
Richard Kroner, executive director of the IAA of New York: "What impressed me most was the address of President Hosni Mubarak, through which he invited everyone to visit Egypt to attend the 36th IAA Congress in 1998. This indicates the Egyptian government's support for the congress, which will be a key factor in making the forthcoming event a successful one. I am certain that preparations for the 1998 IAA Congress are in full swing."

In an interview with Mr Norman Phil, general manager of the IAA, he said after a visit to Istanbul, he will stop in Cairo to meet Mr Adel Afifi, president of the IAA Egyptian chapter, to review the preparations for the 36th IAA Congress in 1998 which Egypt will host.

He added that he visited Egypt 11 years ago, and during the 35th Congress gained an impressive image of the country, not only through videotape presentations, but through the



Norman Phil



Richard Kroner



Myung Ha Kim



Lula Zakaria

Tamoura folk-dancing troupe and the Oriental music played at the Egyptian Night.

Mr Myung Ha Kim, president of the IAA Korean chapter described the Egyptian Night as beautifully impressive. "It inspired all attendees, and I hope the theme of the 1998 IAA Congress, 'Interaction', will be a continuation of the 35th Congress' theme 'New Vision'." He referred to communication as an important means in the age of the information revolution.

Kim expressed his hope that Egypt would become a global communication centre.

### IAA board elections

The IAA board elections are held every two years in the country hosting the congress. Elections for the posts of IAA president, vice-president and board members were held in which Lula Zakaria won the post of vice-president for conference affairs, and Galal Zaki became a board member.



Mr. Sam-Yoon Kim, chairman of the board of IAA in New York; Mr. Adel Mohamed Afifi, president of the IAA's Egyptian branch; and the three winners who will attend the 36th conference, held in Cairo, as Egypt's guests

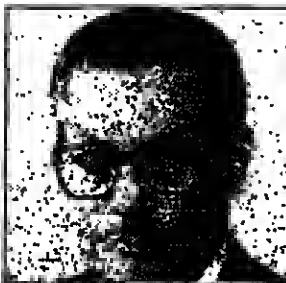


Mr. Adel Mohamed Afifi with three winners from the AdFisica conference held in Bahrain last April who will attend the Cairo '98 Congress, along with Galal Zaki, IAA board member

THE LEAST that can be said about the Egyptian Night, which took place at the conclusion of the 35th IAA Congress in Korea, is that it was like a beautiful symphony. It was a successful event that generated interest among the 2500 attendees from all countries of the world.

Safwat El-Sherif, minister of information, stated that Mubarak's address was displayed on 3 big-screen televisions at the opening of the Egyptian Night. The address was objective, concise and shed light on Egyptian civilisation.

Mamdouh El-Beltagi, minister of



Safwat El-Sherif  
minister of information



Farouk Hosni  
minister of culture



Mamdouh El-Beltagi  
minister of tourism



Ibrahim Nafie  
chairman of the board and  
editor-in-chief of Al-Ahram



Mohamed Amin Shalagani  
Egyptian ambassador  
to Korea

tourism, said that a documentary film was shown about Egypt's hotels, beaches, sports and monuments. All

attendees were clearly impressed by the film. Farouk Hosni, minister of culture,

was the one who recommended the El-Tannoura troupe to perform at the Egyptian Night. Their performance

of folkloric dances grabbed the attention of all who attended. Ibrahim Nafie, chairman off Al-

Ahram Establishment and editor-in-chief of Al-Ahram, said that Al-Ahram spared no effort to support the idea of the congress, adding that Al-Ahram became a corporate member of the IAA. Al-Ahram also rallied the support of ministers and officials in promoting the Egyptian Night. The response was great.

Egypt's ambassador to Korea, Mohamed Amin Shalagani, did his best to accommodate Egyptian delegation in Korea. He made their stay a pleasant one and attended the reception party, receiving guests along with the rest of the IAA members.

### Increase in capital for El-Mohandes

THE BOARD of directors of El-Mohandes Insurance Co. have agreed to increase their issued capital by LE8mn, bringing the paid capital up from LE22 to LE30mn. Samir Mustafa Metwalli, head of the company, explained that the subsequent increase in company shares would be offered to shareholders at the rate of LE10 per share. He pointed out that this decision is in accordance with government regulations which limit the capitals of insurance companies to LE30mn.

## MONEY & BUSINESS



### Egyptian-Canadian project

THE MINISTRY of Electricity has devised an ambitious programme for the manufacture of spare parts for generators, the first of its kind in North Africa and the Middle East. The programme, implemented by the Egyptian-Canadian Boilers Co, is aimed at ending international monopolies and providing job opportunities for Egyptian technicians. The company has now begun manufacturing heavy-load boilers according to international specifications.

## Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt

### Financial statement as of 18 May 1996

Results achieved in LE	18 May 1996	29 May 1995	Growth rate
Total balance	6424	6226.5	3.2%
Deposits	5074.7	4933.3	2.9%
Investment balance	5825.1	5665.4	2.8%
Revenues	570.4	508	12.3%
Net profits	287.2	245.9	16.8%

The value of profits distributed during May 1995/May 1996 totalled LE275.5mn in comparison with LE245.9mn during the previous year.

The number of companies which the bank established and in which it holds shares as of 18 May 1996 reached 38, whose total capital is LE1121mn. The bank holds shares worth LE196mn. in these companies.

## Egypt in international fashion exhibition in Cologne

EGYPT is participating in the Fashion on Top international exhibition for men's, children's and sports clothing in Cologne, Germany, which will include 1750 companies from 50 countries and 350 international clothing designers.

This year Egypt will be represented by 10 companies in the exhibition, having a prominent position among the 1750 exhibitors, 52 per cent of which are from outside Germany, displaying their fashion designs for spring/summer 1997 on the stage, which takes up 165 thousand sq. m. Among the countries participating in the exhibition: Italy, the United States, Great Britain

and Holland. This year, for the first time, the following countries will participate in the exhibition are 8 companies from the Philippines, 4 companies from Venezuela and 5 companies from the Balkans. Another pavilion will be set up for undergarments and swimwear.

The exhibition will also feature a special pavilion, "Fashion on Top", which will include more than 200 exhibitors from 14 countries offering 350 new designs for spring/summer 1997, from the major fashion houses of Great Britain, Italy and France. The exhibition will also include a special pavilion for casual and

sportswear.

Shoe manufacturers will also be showcasing their latest designs in footwear for spring/summer 1997 competing among themselves for the spotlight.

The new attraction at this year's exhibition will include, for the first time, a fashion show by the Japanese fashion house Can-Tzu on Friday, 2 August 1996. Can-Tzu will also be a guest at a discussion of international fashion, which will be translated simultaneously into a number of languages so that attendees from different nations would be able to follow the discussion.

### Al-Ahram computer exhibition

IN TAKING interest in the latest developments of computer technology, Al-Ahram Establishment is making preparations for the 5th Al-Ahram Computer and Information Technology Exhibition which will last from 27 February to 2 March 1997 at the Semiramis International Hotel in the Cleopatra, and Neferiti halls, as well as the foyer. The exhibition follows the 5th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence, to be held at the same location, organised by the Egyptian Computer Association in

### SMG&W offering free service

SMG&W is now offering a service examination with oil end filter change, absolutely free for its customers.

Shawqi Ghattash, chairman of the board of SMG&W, and Mostafa Wahdan, member of the board, said that this is keeping in line with the company's wishes to provide the best service possible to Mercedes owners in Egypt.

In an interview with Magdi Badir, service manager at the company's location in Ard El-Liwa, Mohandessin, he stated that the service centre has an area of 5000 m2, with 38 work areas, and 3 quick-service areas, equipped with the most modern tools and equipment for tune-ups, wheel alignment, in addition to test equipment of the highest calibre. Its technicians and servicemen have been well-prepared with the highest level of training to carry out their work with efficiency.

Maryam Ghattash, public relations manager, said that the company wants its customers to have confidence in all the services which the company provides to them.



### EgyptAir: The first Airbus 321 owner in the Middle East

EGYPTAIR has signed a contract to purchase 4 Airbus 321 planes, allowing non-stop service to all of Europe, most of Central and North Africa and the Arab world.

The Airbus 321 can seat 190 passengers, in addition to 10 business-class seats on each flight. The fully-equipped Airbus 321, capable of flying to the Americas, will replace the carrier's older models and will be delivered during May, June, August and September 1999.

The contract includes a provision for the manufacturing company to convert two 300 B4 planes into cargo planes in order

to facilitate the transport of Egyptian exports, which have shown a marked growth, to the international marketplace.

The contract was signed by Mohamed Fahim Reyan, chairman of the board of EgyptAir, and Harry Korenberg, regional sales representative for the Middle East. Reyan stated that this purchase will further modernise the EgyptAir fleet, attracting more customers. He added that while customers are pleased with the economic advantages of the Airbus 320 currently in use, they will further benefit by the company's purchase of Airbus models 340 and 321.



Egypt's five-star hotels are competing to become as green-friendly as can be. **Rehab Saad** looks into who's made it to the finish line

"This is a national duty," said Nagai

Omar of Le Meridien Heliopolis stressed that these programmes create a new market share and are considered a kind of promotion "because some clients prefer to stay in environment-friendly hotels."

# Riddle at Karnak

It is a royal statue, as is clear from the royal skirt with dagger in the belt. But of whom? True, a *cartouche* on the upper left-hand side of the wall identifies Men-Kheper-Re, which is the phenomenon of Thutmose III, but the evidence cannot be taken at face value. It might originally have

The Festival Hall, like other parts of the Karnak Temple complex, is undergoing conservation.

1. *Phragmites* (common)

Buried Fatimid ancestors found in a newly discovered funerary complex will soon be subject to DNA testing, reports **Omayma Abdel-Latif**

some containing men and women — a practice that runs against the Shari'a Islamic

Among the other finds Gayrand has come across is the most ancient but incomplete mosque site known in Egypt dating back to the mid-eighth century. It includes a finished prayer niche.

Time-conscious professionals and tourists are no longer confined to EgyptAir flight schedules; they can just grab an air taxi. **Sherine Nassr** reports.

A study is now being carried out by tourist companies who own aircraft with a view to stabilising the cost of the service. "Profit-making is not our ultimate goal at present. We'd rather have the service well established in Egypt first," said Salah El-Din, addame

Both the air taxis and ambulances depart from airports nationwide. The control tower is informed of the flight plans one hour before arrival and passengers' names, passport numbers and flight routes are reported to the airport authorities before take-off.

هكذا من رايه



# Defeat, retreat, dissolve

The future created by Zamalek's walkout in last week's crucial match against Ahli has had repercussions probably undreamed of by the players. In fact the fallout from their decision has proved to be just as dramatic as the match itself.

Within 48 hours of the defeated Zamalek side quitting the pitch five minutes before the final whistle, amidst allegations of biased refereeing, the face of Egyptian football had undergone a major change. Gone were the old Zamalek board of directors. Gone too, the board of the Egyptian Football Federation (EFF). Saved, according to supporters of Abdel-Moneim Emara, head of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS), was Zamalek's reputation, along with the club's place in the superleague.

Events began to unfold at an emergency meeting of the Zamalek board held the morning after the defeat. The team's protest had been based on a refusal to accept Ahli's second goal, which, Zamalek maintained, was offside. Heated arguments with the referee were to no avail, and, prompted by an unidentified member of the Zamalek camp, the team walked off the pitch. The referee waited, the team did not return, and Ahli took the match 2-0. In the cold light of day, Zamalek stuck

to their position of the previous night — that the referee chosen by the Egyptian federation had been biased. "Kadri Abdel-Aziz, the referee, is well-known to be an Ahliist (Ahli fan) and his bias towards Ahli has been clear in certain matches," said Galal Ibrahim, ex-president of Zamalek. "We told the EFF and Emara that we didn't want Abdel-Aziz, but no one listened."

By the end of the meeting, the board had come up with a strategy, which it released in a statement: a freeze on football in the Zamalek Club for all age groups, and total disassociation with the EFF. All Zamalek footballers who played for national teams would have to leave those teams. All Zamalek coaches and administrators working in national teams would have to submit their resignation to the EFF, or Zamalek would never deal with them again. And Zamalek would withdraw from all events organised by the EFF until the federation agreed to a replay of the Ahli match with a foreign referee.

Concern over the match had already been shown in various quarters, but when news of Zamalek's decision broke, Emara was besieged by phone calls and faxes, some from influential sources in Egypt and the Arab countries. Their message was clear: something had to be done. Emara hardly hesitated. That same day he issued a statement announcing the dissolution of the board of directors of both the Zamalek Club and the EFF.

According to Emara, the decision to dissolve the federation was based on the failure of the board to run Egyptian soccer, as was evident in the Ahli-Zamalek incident. "Unfortunately, this was obvious to everyone during the Ahli-Zamalek match," explained Emara. "It was the federation's failure which led to the chaos and confusion. The SCYS, being the official authority responsible for sport in Egypt has been very patient with this federation. It has made a lot of errors over the past few years, but this was the final straw. We could no longer tolerate it because it could have led to a situation

where hooliganism prevailed."

However he pointed out that federation elections were in three months time, so his decision would not have a long-term impact on the EFF. Until that time, a five-member committee, appointed by Emara, will look after the federation's affairs. The committee consists of Mohamed El-Siagi as president, assisted by Mahmoud El-Khatib, Ibrahim Yousef, Qadri Abdel-Halim and Farag Bayoumi.

The dismissed former president of the EFF, Dahshoury Harb, received the news in Hurgada, where he had gone with his family the day after the match. He was informed of the decision as he stepped off a boat after a fishing trip.

Stunned by Emara's decision, Harb told reporters: "I am really surprised by the SCYS's reaction to this matter; the whole situation has been fabricated by the Zamalek Club. Dissolving the federation is illogical and illegal. It is the SCYS's interference in federation policy, taking the side of the clubs instead of backing the federations in applying the regulations,

which is largely responsible for the deterioration in Egyptian sport."

All he had wanted, he added, was to remain in post long enough to see Zamalek relegated from the superleague to the first division. Relegation is a punishment facing any team which walks out of a match.

Meanwhile, temporary federation President Mohamed El-Siagi is modest in his aspirations for his new role. The league will resume as previously scheduled and he doesn't plan any major changes. "It would be unfair, and also useless, for me to be taking decisions in a matter of hours, changing the clubs' preparations and schedules," he remarked. "My task comes at a crucial time. The committee and I have a hard job ahead of us and not much time to do it. We will exert all our efforts to make it a success."

Their task will be made easier, perhaps, by the other half of Emara's two-pronged attack: the dissolving of the board of the Zamalek Club. By laying the blame on the shoulders of the board, rather than the

players, Emara saw fit to allow Zamalek to remain in the superleague. He has appointed a new committee for the club, consisting of Kamal Darwish as club president, and Abdel-Aziz Qabil, Mahmoud Badreddin and Azmi Megahed as members. They will remain in charge for a year.

At a press conference, Emara explained his position regarding the rebel club. By walking out, Emara said, Zamalek had put its reputation on the line. And by issuing their statement, the board of committee was putting an end to Zamalek's existence in the superleague. "This is not what the Egyptians want," stressed Emara. "I tried as best I could to prevent a disaster which could have affected Egypt on all levels."

Feelings at grassroots level are mixed. Many Zamalek fans are still angry. After both the defeat and Emara's decision, fans gathered outside the club, either to protest the defeat, the refereeing, or at what they saw as Emara's interference in internal club affairs.

But is Emara yet another thorn in Zamalek's side, or was he acting to save a great club, with an illustrious history and a bright future, which had put itself in danger of falling from grace?

## Germany's golden goal



**EURO 96**

A GOLDEN Goal in the fourth minute of extra-time has made Germany the Euro 96 champions — the first time a major championship has ever been decided under the Golden Goal rule, by which the first team to score in extra time wins the match, writes Eric Aspinwall. It was also the first Golden Goal of the Euro 96 championship, a tournament littered with cliffhanging finishes and exasperating penalty shootouts.

A 73,611-strong crowd, including Britain's Queen Elizabeth, Prime Minister John Major, Czech President Vaclav Havel and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, witnessed Sunday's final. The Czechs, who had started the championship at odds of 66-1, were the first to score, from a controversial 57th minute penalty by Patrik Berger following Matthias Sammer's foul on Karel Poborsky slightly outside the box. The equaliser came from German substitute Oliver Bierhoff, with a close-range header from Christian Ziege's cutting freekick.

Both teams had near misses. Four minutes before half-time, Kuka penetrated the Czech defence, forcing Kouba to race off his line. The sting was taken out of Kuka's shot by the goalkeeper's body block, but it took a bicycle kick from a Czech defender to head the ball out of danger. But perhaps the saddest miss of all was about two minutes before time, when substitute Vladimir Smicer, just back from his own wedding, almost scored the winner.

But in the end the day was Germany's. After 90 minutes of play, the teams were back on the pitch for extra time. Bierhoff, pinned down on the edge of the box, turned and shot through a narrow space in the Czech defence. Kouba, moving in the wrong direction, was just able to get his hand to the ball, but could only watch as the shot bounced off the post and trickled over the line. The Golden Goal had been shot, and Germany were Euro 96 champions.



Germany's Markus Babel clashes with Pavel Kuka of the Czech Republic during the final of Euro 96 at Wembley Stadium in London (Photo: AP)

## A star to watch

Mansoura met Ahli in today's Cup Final. And for young Mansoura player Tamer Bagato, the game could be the first step on the road to football stardom, writes Abeer Anwar

Tamer Bagato never expected football stardom. Like lots of boys, he loved the game, and like lots of boys, he played on a club team. He started playing for the Shams Club at the age of nine, but did not dedicate himself exclusively to football, enjoying swimming and squash just as much.

At the age of 12, Bagato was spotted by Ahli's junior coach during a friendly match, and offered a place on their junior team. He stayed with Ahli, and was the team's top scorer from the age of 14 to 21.

Anwar Salama, then head of the national under-19 team, also recruited the young Bagato, and he went on to represent Egypt in India's Gandhi Tournament and the African Nations Juniors qualifications in Mauritius. He excelled in both events, and was the second highest scorer in the Mauritius competition, with only one goal difference behind the Cameroonian winner.

However, despite performances like these, Ahli did not consider the young player first team material. "This was a shock for me," recalls Bagato. "I decided to stop playing the game completely and started to hate even watching football." But,

family and friends convinced him that he did indeed have a future in football, and that he should try his luck with another team.

"I went to Zamalek but their players' list was full," continued Bagato. But he struck lucky with Suez Canal and Mansoura. Both teams offered to take him. Bagato decided to sign with Mansoura for LE50,000. "Because I signed late, I had to stay on the substitutes' bench for a long time because the league tournament had already started and I was not used to playing with the team," Bagato explained. But, with time and help from Coach Hassan Megahed, he became one of the team's key players.

Being one of Mansoura's key players is not, one might think, a gateway to overnight fame and fortune. But when Mansoura is matched against Zamalek, and when that Mansoura key player scores not one, but two, goals, thrusting his small town team into the Egyptian Cup finals, then he is the player everyone will be talking about the next day. This is what happened to Bagato.

The Cup final itself has been postponed until 4 July. For Bagato, the

match will be both a team and a personal challenge — after all it was Ahli who had turned him down early in his career. While waiting for that match, Bagato has been able to gain some satisfaction when Mansoura met Ahli in the league tournament, by scoring the game's only goal.

"I can't express the mixed feelings I had before the match," Bagato recalls. "It was a mixture of fear and happiness: fear because it was my first match against Ahli, and happiness because at last I had the chance to take on Ahli and show them that they had missed out on a good player when they refused to take me on."

Bagato's prediction of a Zamalek league victory turned out to be wrong. But, needless to say, he is working hard to prevent Ahli winning the double. At this stage it is hard for Bagato to think beyond today's Cup Final. But he has clearly given the future some thought, and he has big ambitions: "On the national level, I would like to join the national team," he said, "and on the international level, I would eventually like to be a professional in Europe."



Bagato on the road to football stardom

## Egypt strikes African gold

The Egyptian team won eight medals with only six athletes at last week's All African Championships, reports Dalia El-Hennawy

The Egyptian athletics team made a good showing in the 10th All African Championships last week in Yaounde, Cameroon. With only six athletes, the team managed to bring home eight medals: one gold, three silver and four bronze. A total of 30 countries took part, with Nigeria scoring an overwhelming victory, followed by Kenya and Tunisia.

Egypt's star of the event was shotputter Hassan Khaled, who took the gold medal, followed by Wafaa Baghdady in the silver medal position. Nagwa Ibrahim set a new Egyptian record in the five kilometres walk to win the silver with a time of 24:05.4, and Hassan El-Sayed won not one but two silver medals — in the decathlon and the pole vault. Karima Meskin won bronze medals in both the 200 and 400 metres, and Henfy Abdel-Magsooud took the bronze in the 400 metres hurdles.

"We faced a lot of obstacles," commented Egyptian technical manager Hossni El-Kafrawy after the championship. "The rainy weather, which we weren't prepared for, the fact that some of our athletes couldn't attend, and the food, which we weren't used to."

But taking these disadvantages into account, El-Kafrawy was satisfied with his team's performance.

"I'm quite happy with the result, because I was looking more at the athletes' development rather than winning medals per se. Most of our athletes either achieved new personal records, new Egyptian records, or else won a

gold medal," he continued. "This means that they are gaining experience and shows that our training programme is going well, which is a good sign as far as the juniors are concerned. We're concentrating on the juniors at the moment because they are beginning to show great promise."

Exams were largely to blame for the absence of some of Egypt's key athletes, according to Abeer Atef, manager of the Egyptian Athletics Federation. Sherif El-Hennawy, Egyptian and African champion in the hammer throw was one such athlete. "He had been expected to win the gold," commented Atef.

"And Mohamed Sami, Egyptian champion in the 110 metres hurdles, was a sure thing for a bronze, as was Hatem Mersal in the long jump. We would certainly have come out better in the African ratings if they had been there."

Nevertheless, Atef added, Egypt would be participating in the East and Central African Championships in Uganda. "This will be excellent competition, especially with the Kenyan, Ethiopian, Ugandan and Tanzanian champions taking part."

And, with an eye on preparing a team for the 2000 Olympics, plans are also afoot for the junior athletes to train in Stuttgart in Germany.

Edited by Inas Mazhar





(l-r): Moments of dialogue with Sadat; heading a conference of the Arab Lawyers' Federation; receiving benediction from Pope Kirolos; advocating a case in court; campaigning for syndicate elections (photos: Al-Ahram)

## Ahmed El-Khawaga: The rallying cry

Summer by the sea? Well, maybe... Just a few loose ends to tie up first: there's the Bar Association, and freedom of speech, and that other trial — yes, the big one...



At ten, his workaholic schedule begins to wind down in preparation for the small hours of the night. It is time to relax, but never completely, really: there are always the inevitable phone calls — rounding up work from the Bar Association, or setting appointments with clients.

He smokes heavily, despite a history of heart trouble. At 67, his face has lost its chubby lines; there are more black hairs on his head than white. But he never gave much thought to his health. Until a few years ago, he'd trek the four kilometres from his home in Giza down to his office at the Imhotep building on Sherif Street. But he lost the habit, bound in the over-riding cycle of work, and weakened by his recurrent health crises.

A man comes in with cups of Turkish coffee. The atmosphere in the house has vastly changed over the past year and a half, since his wife Wafaa passed away. He lights a cigarette. "It is not easy, after forty years of living with someone, to be alone." He is brief. She was strong, sharing all his activities — central to the very fabric of his life. He shifts his leg, nervously, betraying himself.

Her death came at a vulnerable moment, when he was facing what may have been the greatest crisis of his thirty-year career in the Bar Association. The Bar underwent sequestration last January by virtue of a court sentence.

The verdict ended a deadlock brought on by accusations that the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated council was guilty of financial malpractice and monopolising the Bar's political motives.

Although El-Khawaga, one of the Bar, was appointed as one of its three sequestrators, he appealed the verdict. "I see what happened as an expression of absolute dysfunction. I warned the Brotherhood council members that their attempts to monopolise the Bar, which has always been a national body — above any particular political affiliations — would bring

things to a head. Now they tell me I was right." El-Khawaga has been accused of partial responsibility for the Brotherhood's increasing hegemony over the council since the 1992 elections. He turned a blind eye, his critics say, to the Brotherhood's obvious violations of syndicate regulations, despite his public denunciations of its practices — others would see his reluctance to take action as typical of his pragmatic power-balancing acts.

"To have brought things to a confrontation with any party inside the syndicate would only have deepened the split within it. I see that what I did was not compromise, but integration. It is this which enabled me, at this point, to arbitrate between the different factions in the current dispute."

He is the interest-broker: his skill may have been one of the reasons for his phenomenal success as a contender in the Bar elections. He headed its council for eight terms, three of them in the '60s, and now, having exceeded the allotted number of times candidates can stand for re-election, is currently in his last term.

Born in El-Mahalla El-Kubra in 1929, Ahmed El-Khawaga and his generation of lawyers came after the grand masters of the liberal age. He was of a new breed, and perhaps one of a kind. His star rose, his political acumen found expression under Nasser. He was mercurial, nevertheless, adapting to changing exigencies and negotiating union and political issues successfully in the socialist '60s and the liberal '70s.

Academically brilliant and politically active during his university years, he graduated from the Faculty of Law in 1949. He belonged to the highly politicised student union as well as the Wafd's youth organisation, the Wafdist Vanguard.

His rise through the ranks of the Arab Socialist Union was meteoric, from the legal committee to the Committee of 100. A clever campaigner, he ran for parliament and became a member of the Na-

tional Assembly (Majlis Al-Umma), then head of the Bar in 1966. He quickly moved it into line with Nasser's socialist policies, pushing forth legislation which resulted in the admission to the Bar of employees working in public-sector legal departments. He strengthened the Bar's subsidiary branches in the provinces, and was successful in securing sources of funding.

He became head of the Arab Lawyers' Federation in 1967, a position he has held ever since. Non-alignment and pan-Arabism were at their peak, and El-Khawaga headed delegations to various summits and peace conferences. In the turbulent days following Camp David, El-Khawaga worked to keep the federation in Cairo despite the Arab boycott of Egypt. For thirty years he balanced the federation's contending factions. He is "proud that, despite Sudan's recent attempts to have the federation moved, it still remains in Cairo."

Arrested in May 1971 during Sadat's "Corrective Revolution", he made a comeback in 1978, winning the Bar elections against the then head, Mustafa El-Barad'i.

Throughout the late '70s, El-Khawaga led a strong council representing an array of independent, Nasserist, Marxist and Wafdist groups. It spearheaded opposition to the Camp David accords, and clashed with Sadat over "democracy and the syndicate's independence". The council was twice disbanded by Sadat.

There was exacerbation, and one responded. Sadat wanted to turn the Bar into a social club, but it was not possible because of its history, because of its great nationalist tradition," El-Khawaga says with feeling. "It was the very first Egyptian syndicate, founded in 1912 by Ibrahim Pascha El-Hilwawi to establish equal status for Egyptian lawyers with respect to their foreign counterparts. It was headed by Saad Zaghloul, it led the national struggle against the British — by its nature, it

could never have remained inward-looking."

El-Khawaga joined the new Wafd Party in the '70s — not a renunciation of his Nasserist sympathies, but a bit of nostalgia for the "old Wafd", the repository of the liberal democratic influences which formed his generation. In the '70s and '80s, he found a means of expressing his convictions. Since the mid-'70s, he has defended almost every single case involving freedom of expression and liberal values. He opposed the banning of *One Thousand and One Nights* when it came under onslaught for its alleged "obscenity". He was one of Youssef Chahine's defendants in the case brought against *The Immigrant*, and also participated in the defence of university professor Nasser Hamed Abu Zeid, dragged to court for presenting academic research which Islamist groups considered heretical.

El-Khawaga has also been prominent, most often in his capacity as head of the Bar, in controversial political cases — most, but significantly not all, dear to the left. He was a lawyer for the defendants in the "Egypt's Revolution" case, which involved President Nasser's son Khaled. He was part of the defence of Soliman Khater, a soldier accused of killing Israeli tourists, who later died in prison. He contested the trial of civilians in military courts in cases brought against the Muslim Brotherhood.

El-Khawaga is often described as the supreme pragmatist: a Nasserist among Nasserists, a Wafdist among Wafdist, and, rumour has it, a member of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP). Charismatic, he has the capacity "to forge an empathetic bond with others". He has been described as exhibiting "fox-like cunning", combining gritty up-and-at-em confrontation with deceptive flexibility. He takes criminal cases, rather than civil law where his heart really lies. Never authoritarian, he elicits compliance from his assistants with inimitable tact.

His command of the Arabic language belongs to

an almost-forgotten tradition. He is erudite, a brilliant speaker, difficult to confound, he keeps his adversaries on their toes in any public debate. But throughout his career, in the very bitterest moments of public confrontation, he would stick to dialogue with his opponents, leaving bridges open. When his wife died, it was his adversaries who bore her coffin. Her funeral was attended by over a thousand lawyers; tigers of every political stripe were present — across the spectrum from the opposition to the NDP.

When tension was exacerbated during the Bar's latest crisis, and he was almost broken by his personal loss, his friends told him to resign. Take a rest, they said, take a break from the strain. Your past record is enough; you can leave the syndicate honourably at a moment of impending disintegration. El-Khawaga refused. Seemingly beleaguered, he made a U-turn. No more confrontation: he became the mediator. Because of his legacy of past success, and because of all those bridges, thrown down over the years, he became the rallying point — the one individual able to juggle the contending factions and bring the Bar out of its historic impasse, steering it towards more balanced elections at the end of this year.

Perhaps when the task is done he will, as in summers past, spend August in Mamoura, by the sea. He prefers its pedestrian qualities to the exclusive resort his daughter took him to last year.

And perhaps, as in summers past, he will wait on one of the bamboo chairs set out every night in the garden of his small bungalow, ready to receive his visitors. He will always be a part of things around him.

Clad in a white *galabiya*, surrounded by lawyers, politicians, ministers and friends, he will sit, unceremoniously — a star.

Profile by Aziza Sami



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## Pack of cards by Madame Sosostri

There's not many people who can boast being given a magnificent garden as a wedding present, but that is exactly what my good friend and colleague Pascale Ghazaleh and independent researcher Mohamed Hakeem got, even if it only was for the night of their wedding party. It was thanks to publisher/historian Maged Farag that his spectacular Mohamed Ali Club was the location for the party, made all the more magical against an idyllic backdrop of the Nile, sprawling gardens, palm trees and flowers and marble balustrades. It was an elegant yet casual affair, elegant enough to be a true wedding in every sense of the word, yet casual enough for the guests to let loose and really enjoy themselves. A veritable dream for us

Weekly staff, whose idea of getting dressed up means putting on a clean shirt. We showed up in droves, ready for some serious partying. Rumour had it that most people were pretty merry before they showed up, and those who weren't claim that it wasn't long before they were, university friends and professors, colleagues and friends at work, artists and intellectuals galore were all as sparkling as they could possibly be. Every where I looked I saw old friends and familiar faces. Through-

out the evening I caught glimpses of, and chatted to, actress Mervana Tawfik, poet/songwriter Sayed Elmaghrabi, artist Mohamed Abba, political scientist Gamal Matar, singer Khaled Geyssati, artist Gamal Shafiq — whose daringly designed wedding invitation was something the guests would all hold on to for a long time to

come — and his lovable wife Sola, caricaturist Raouf Ayad and radio/TV announcer Bethany Kamel. Her husband, professor Emad Abu Ghazi, was just one of a school of professors and lecturers present, including director of the Arab Research Centre Helmi Shasrawi, historians Mohamed El-Kordy, Nelly Hanna, Raouf Abbas, and sociologist Abdel-Baset Abdel-Moeti. While some treated themselves to the delicious BBQ and pastries and others danced and mingled, some, including the bride's mother, colleague and friend Fayza Hassan, were more than happy to just beam the whole evening long. The mood was so elated that nobody seemed to mind that almost all the songs being played by the DJ were by



Above: "Do you want another party?" Pascale and Mohamed. Left: Walker (right) and head of USAID John Wesley.

Mohamed Mounir or that the bride and groom — met with a home-grown zaffa by three friends banging away at two tablas and vigorously shaking a tambourine — were fashionably late (and, in a gorgeous white dress and black jeans and waistcoat, rather fashionably dressed too). Good timing that it was,

the couple left yesterday for Paris where they will be turning a business trip — they are both attending a conference there — into a ready-made honeymoon.

Every now and then I feel the need to give a little more to society than just my graceful and charming presence, and decide to attend an event more for its substance than for its social value. My good deed for the month will be to attend the Arab Youth Forum's Training and Awareness conference, which was inaugurated by head of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Abdel-Moneim Ennara, director of Cairo University Murid Shehab and AUC's deputy head of Student Affairs Abdel-Khalek Allam yesterday at AUC. Held under the academic auspices of secretary-general of the Arab League Emad Abdel-Meguid and his special political advisor Nassef El-Hiti, the conference will bring together students from Arab and Egyptian universities. And believe me, dear, from what I've seen of previous student conferences such as this, I have no doubt that it will be a huge success.

Head of the organising committee, Mohamed Radwan, tells me that this particular one aims to provide the appropriate environment for the exchange of experience, knowledge and culture — of which there is much, I'm sure — among the region's youth and provide them with the necessary skills to become future leaders and decision-makers in different fields.

Tired of business meetings and social obligations, US ambassador Edward Walker re-

cently hosted a day of games, dancing and eating at the US Embassy for its Egyptian and American staff. And so it was to be that one sunny afternoon, several impromptu teams battled it out in the back yard of the premises for the worthy title of Toughest Football Team in Garden City.

The games inevitably gave way to a hearty lunch, after which staff members kept the embassy rocking by showing off their singing 'talents' through a roaring karaoke system, prompting many of those watching to break into uncontrollable jitters and other dance concoctions.



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